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BOUNDARIES OF CONSENT IN *ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL, THE MERCHANT OF VENICE, OTHELLO* AND *THE TEMPEST*

BY

Felicity Ann McLean Enayat ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1994.

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ISBN 0-315-94853-1

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DEGREE: Master of Arts

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED: 1994

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Felicity Enayat

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VOB 1L0

9 May 1994

Inspired merit so by breath is barr'd.
It is not so with Him that all things knows
As 'tis with us that square our guess by shows;
But most it is presumption in us when
The help of heaven we count the act of men.
Dear sir, to my endeavours give consent;
Of heaven, not me, make an experiment.
(*All's Well That Ends Well*, 2.1.147-53)

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled BOUNDARIES OF CONSENT IN *ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL, THE MERCHANT OF VENICE, OTHELLO* AND *THE TEMPEST* here submitted by Felicity Ann McLean Enayat in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS.

Professor Linda Woodbridge
Linda Woodbridge

Professor Lynn Penrod
Lynn Kettler Penrod

Professor Ronald Ayling
R.F. Ayling

4 May 1994

DEDICATION

To my Mother, Gladys Isabel McLean

and
to the Romeos and Juliets of every nation
who defy custom for the sake of true love and unity.

ABSTRACT

Using historical and textual methods, this thesis considers Shakespeare's representation of some aspects of marital consent in *All's Well That Ends Well, The Merchant of Venice, Othello,* and *The Tempest.* In the chapter on *All's Well* I discuss the impingement of class on the representation of consent, particularly as it is conveyed in the dialogue and by the inversion of traditional courtship rituals and marriage rites. "Choice and creed" are the focus of my study of *The Merchant of Venice* which examines money, language, law, and nature in relation to consent and religion. In *Othello* I look at the tropes of burglary and magic as they correspond to the issues of colour and consent. The chapter on *The Tempest* explores the relationship between consent and the different forms of government dealt with in the play. The idea of consent in each play is measured against the definition of free consent given in The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Consideration is given to the differences between the treatment of consent in Shakespeare's plays and its treatment in the major sources that he is believed to have used. The thesis provides evidence for a liaison between the textual features of the plays and the ways in which class, religion, race, and politics restricted consent in society at the time the plays were first produced. It shows that consent is one of the principal issues treated in these plays and suggests that through them Shakespeare sometimes resisted some of the prejudices of his era.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My family, friends, and community, of whom I have all but suspended my loving care during the past year, must take credit for the timely completion of this research. I owe much gratitude for the encouragement received from so many, in particular from Professors Fred Radford, Brahma Chaudhuri, David Miall, and Diane Bessai, my dear teacher Mary Mallon and friends Nandini Chaudhuri, Muriel Clarke and Kate Lindsay, and last but not least my close relatives, above all my beloved mother-in-law, mother, and husband. For Professor Lynn Penrod's and Professor Ron Ayling's magnanimity and patience I also owe much thanks, as I do to the chairman of my examining committee Professor Radford, for his kind presence and generous support. I am especially grateful for Professor Linda Woodbridge's open-minded acceptance of my project, her consistently helpful direction to source materials, her challenging questions, her illuminating criticism, and her good-humoured guidance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1	Limiting Man's Limits	1
Chapter 2	A Class Dimension: Bedding and Breeding in *All's Well That Ends Well*	12
Chapter 3	A Religious Dimension: Choice and Creed in *The Merchant of Venice*	45
Chapter 4	A Racial Dimension: Consent and Colour in *Othello*	75
Chapter 5	A Political Dimension: Freedom of Consent and Government in *The Tempest*	99
Chapter 6	Conclusion: "The Main Consents"	137
Bibliography		143

Chapter 1

Introduction:
Limiting Man's Limits

As the capacities of the new world's peoples came to light in the sixteenth century, the white men from Europe sought ways to limit their emergence or to make them conform to the culture of the "discoverers". The symbolization of the new world and its peoples as a desirable and passive woman was one metaphor employed in the art and literature of the period which perhaps made this process acceptable to the minds of the more compassionate subjects of the imperialist nations, minds that were only beginning to question the subordinate position of women.[1] Ironically, as this project was in hand for the *tenor* of this metaphor -- the newly dominated lands -- so was it about to grow into an issue for its *vehicle*, woman. One of the most important ways in which the progress and empowerment of woman was limited and which became part of the issue was the restrictions placed upon her right to choose her marriage partner freely. For many men the right to free marital consent was similarly limited for reasons of class, religion, race, and politics.

Partly as a result of the debate that arose in England over the question of marital consent, the era of Shakespeare witnessed a new impetus in the long evolution towards the extension to the generality of society of the freedoms enjoyed in the past only by kings and rulers and towards the transfer to women of rights hitherto given only to men. Inasmuch as these goals of equality are still today incompletely realized, the study of any aspect of the history of humanity in which attention was paid them is of interest to me. Besides the subordination of women, the limiting of the family's and society's composition largely to people of one colour, one religion, and one political persuasion has been a major obstacle to the attainment of equality: The unknown is usually objectified and degraded; the continuation of such objectification and degradation is dependent upon the continuance of separation and ignorance. The limiting of the right to free consent has long been used to perpetuate a separation between people of difference. I can see wisdom in a system that provides for mothers' and fathers' consenting to their children's chosen partner, after that partner has been freely chosen without parental intervention; but I believe that the system's ignoring, for reasons of difference in class, religion, race, or political persuasion, the natural right of men and women to choose their partners freely places limits on the development and empowerment of people. I therefore take my definition of the freedom of consent from The Universal Declaration of Human Rights that in its 1948 outline of rights observes that these rights apply to "everyone" and "without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status."[2] The first two paragraphs of article 16 concern consent:

> 1. Men and women of full age, without limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
> 2. Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.[3]

While there are groups that tender the idea that such freedoms as those mentioned above are not universal, the ideal of the preservation of human life is a value found in all cultures. From this "universal" value has stemmed the idea of human rights, that all human beings must have certain freedoms which are not subject to race, class, sex, religion, or political affiliation. The delineation of these rights may be a matter of contention; certainly the right to free and full consent is one of those rights not entirely agreed upon in all societies. Nevertheless, in any study a measure is needed against which data can be compared; this, I hope, is sufficient justification for the working definition above.

The methodology of my study is historical, although I do not partake of the belief that a text is simply determined by the social and political milieu in which it is written. I have tried to avoid some of the pitfalls identified by Brian Vickers in the chapter "New Historicism: Disaffected Subjects" of his recent book *Appropriating Shakespeare* (1993), by differentiating between sixteenth-century political attitudes and those of today.[4] Nevertheless, the context in which any student is living necessarily will colour his or her approach to the subject of study; it is not only impossible to resist completely this context, nor does it necessarily enhance the outcome of the study. As for Vickers's precautions about the use of anecdotes,[5] I have used them to provide non-fictional illustrations of the legal or historical references, to add an emotional flavour to ideas, and, finally, because I believe that knowledge from one culture can illuminate the knowledge of another culture. I concur with Vickers's statement that "dramatists are not colonists" and that "They create in language both a world and its inhabitants"[6] that is, they create an imaginary world that may as easily be studied within the context of that world itself or of the entire imaginary universe to which it belongs -- all its author's writings -- or within the context of the several universes of the works of the dramatists of their period, as within the unimaginary social and historical context the author and his audience inhabits (which now we are finding out is also imaginary). I feel, however, that whether we look at an Elizabethan drama as it compares to works by its author or his contemporaries or whether we look at it in the context of twentieth-century society, each approach casts light on just one part of a play; each will be, therefore, necessarily limiting and unbalanced. But with many studies employing a multitude of approaches our understanding and appreciation of the art piece will grow. My looking at Shakespeare's plays through the lens of marital consent is a more limiting method than many of the studies undertaken from other viewpoints. I found it necessary to narrow it even more; finally I look at consent in only four plays and these in relation to just a few aspects of their representation of class, religion, race, and politics.

In Elizabethan England, class, religion, colour, and politics commonly impinged upon the free consent of men and women. The English matrimonial law, as Margaret Loftus Ranald explains, was essentially the same as "pre-Tridentine Roman Canon Law."[7] Under this system the primary condition was the free consent of the partners to the marriage;[8] but there were a number of "diriment impediments" and other impediments that in practice narrowed the range of a person's choice to persons of the same class and the same religion.[9] Because political persuasion and colour were intimately connected with class and religion, if not always in reality at least in the minds of many people, the restrictions effectively extended often to persons of a different political persuasion and different colour.[10] A reform to the Roman Canon-based English law in 1604 provided for "the consent of parents or guardians for the marriage of persons under the age of twenty-one."[11] The same provision but without any stipulation concerning age had been made in a Canterbury canon in 1571.[12] Although it had long been the practice for the parent's (especially the father's), and the employer's and the guardian's permission to be sought before marriage,[13] these two laws provided the structure with further safeguards against marriages between people of different backgrounds and beliefs. The restrictions were tightened where the parents and guardians themselves chose spouses for their children.[14] Frequently these arranged marriages were motivated by social, political, and economic considerations that benefited the parents and guardians, so that, although the children whose choice was manipulated in this manner could sometimes refuse the partner chosen for them, it was not easy to do so. In his study of "Spousals Litigation in England 1350-1640" Martin Ingram found that the litigations concerning one partner's reneging on his promise to marry because of opposition from his family were more frequent than those concerning children trying to marry against family will.[15] As secret marriage was also subject to sanctions, there were few ways that a person male or female could be fully free in his or her consent.[16] To further complicate these restrictions, in England as in many countries political status and power were dependent upon property and property upon marriage. Therefore, consenting to marriage, whether for man or woman, had political implications that ranged from the waging of wars to the governing of people and property. Such a liaison was present even in the early history of England when there were laws restricting blood feuds fought to avenge injustice to cases where the injustice was committed against legitimate family members.[17] The annual marriage taxes and merchet -- "a single payment made by the father [to his master] when he gave his child in marriage"[18] -- that were levied in the twelfth century and before on peasants and serfs are just one evidence of the long-standing relationship in England between marriage and political status.[19] In later centuries the dowry and jointure practices continued to make consent a matter of political importance for the couple, the couple's families and the society. Although customs varied from class to class, for women the connections between property and politics often implied more limitations on their rights to free consent, because men were frequently given precedence in inheritance and husbands and father-in-laws often had rights over their wives' property.[20] The following quotation from "Lady Elizabeth Livingston's reflections on hearing of the marriage of Lord Annesley, her erstwhile suitor, to Lady Elizabeth Manners, 3 December 1669" shows how severely property, class and politics sometimes impinged upon the freedom of consent:

> I was not at all impatient for a change in his father's resolutions, not at all doubting but, if the king's power had not, time and perseverance in our love would most certainly have done it; . . . and therefore most rash as well as unjust was he to break his vows rather than for a short while to endure the threats of an incensed father . . .
>
> Had he been naturally of a covetous temper, and so far dreaded the effects of his father's anger that he resolved to sacrifice both his love and his honour rather than risk the loss of his estate for my sake, I might have expected to be forsaken when an estate came once to be put into the balance with me. . .[21]

Despite the comprehensiveness of the controls on free consent, there were a number of pressures pushing against the system, among them, the movement to London of relatively large numbers of single young women whose activities were less easily supervised by their fathers than were those of women native to the city,[22] the relatively free life of English women,[23] the influx into London of aliens of varied colour, religion, and nationality,[24] and the protests brought to Parliament over forced marriages and disparagement.[25] The problems created by the increasing number of forced marriages were also addressed in literary works of various sorts. The author of *The Passionate Morrice* (1593), for example, derides the practices of the time, saying, "Fie, fie, marriages for the most part are at this day so made, as looke how the butcher bies his cattel, so will men sel their children . . . Why, it is a common practise to aske the father what hee will give with his childe, and what is that differing from cheapening an Ore?" and advising that "honestie honours the consent of Parents, but abhorres such love as is built on their liking . . ." [26] A glance at the dramas produced in Elizabethan and Jacobean times reveals a swarm of plots centred on the question of marital consent and its relation to race and religion and, above all, to class and politics. Leonard Tennenhouse in "Family Rites: City Comedy and the Strategies of Patriarchalism" cites almost a dozen comedies in which the control of marriage is displayed as the principal means for controlling property and politics, from *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* to *A Mad World, My Masters*, and Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*.[27] Hardly a comedy can be found that does not in some way allude to this connection, or to the connection between consent and religious or racial difference. Besides *Measure for Measure*, a large number of Shakespeare's dramas are concerned with marital consent -- all his comedies and romances and a number of his tragedies, such as *Romeo and Juliet, Othello, King Lear*, and of his histories, including *King Henry the Fifth* and *King John*. Many of these make use of prejudices against different class, colour, politics, and country of origin in their representation of consent. Stephen Orgel has observed that "The family paradigm that emerges from Shakespeare's imagination is a distinctly unstable one" and, though he infers that the reasons for this are psychological, it is impossible, given the proliferation of other dramas raising the same issues, not to see some liaison between Shakespeare's plays and their social and historical context.[28]

The studies of Shakespeare's "politics" by Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (1985) and by John Alvis and Thomas G. West (1981) paved the way for a flood of scholarship in this domain.[29] The students of Shakespeare whose comments on liaisons between his plays and his social and historical context have helped me in my own study are too many to mention, but some shall be mentioned in the chapters that follow. Among these Margaret Loftus Ranald in her book *Shakespeare and His Social Context,* to which I have frequently referred, discusses perhaps in greatest detail connections between Shakespeare's plays and English matrimonial law. I have chosen to look at the idea of consent in four of Shakespeare's dramas, *All's Well That Ends Well, The Merchant of Venice, Othello,* and *The Tempest,* each of which casts this concept in a different shape, as issues of class, religion, colour, and politics come into play. Marital consent is not the central focus of any of these plays, except possibly *All's Well* if it is not read for its symbolism, but it is sufficiently present in all of them to merit study. In the chapter on *All's Well* I discuss the relationship between "bedding and breeding" -- the impingement of class on the representation of consent -- particularly as it is conveyed in the language and by the inversion of traditional courtship rituals and marriage rites. "Choice and creed" are the focus of my study of *The Merchant of Venice* that examines money, language, law, and nature in relation to consent and religion. In *Othello* I look at the tropes of burglary and magic as they correspond to themes of colour and consent. Finally, my chapter on *The Tempest* explores the relationship between consent and the different forms of government discussed in the play. In each discussion, consideration is given to the differences between the treatment of consent in Shakespeare's plays and its treatment in the major sources that he is believed to have used. I have tried to come to some conclusion in my research on each drama about the dominant form of the consent projected by the play within Shakespeare's historical context and against the definition cited above -- to make the idea of consent, like a new land, float out of the misty seas of its context.

Notes

[1] The woman-land metaphor was also characteristic of the European's representation of their native lands, as indeed it has been and is for many other peoples. See Annette Kolodny, *The Lay of the Land* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975).

[2] Ian Brownlie, ed. *Basic Documents on Human Rights,* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981) 22.

[3] Brownlie, 24.

[4] Brian Vickers, *Appropriating Shakespeare: Contemporary Critical Quarrels* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993) 214-71.

[5] Vickers, 229.

[6] Vickers, 246.

[7] Margaret Loftus Ranald, *Shakespeare and His Social Context: Essays in Osmotic Knowledge and Literary Interpretation* (New York: AMS Press, 1987) 5.

[8] Martin Ingram explains the preeminence given to verbal consent:

> The Church's law on the definition of a valid marriage was in essence fixed in the twelfth century; in Catholic Europe it was altered only in the sixteenth century, and in England only in 1753. The fundamental principle was that an indissoluble bond was created (assuming no basic impediment existed to bar the marriage) solely by the present consent of the parties, rather than by the act of coitus -- which an older tradition supported by Gratian had held to be requisite in addition to consent -- or by solemnization in church. Thus the essence of a legally valid marriage was a contract in which the couple accepted each other as man and wife in words of the present tense (contract or spousals *per verba de praesenti*).
>
> (Martin Ingram, "Spousals Litigation in the English Ecclesiastical Courts, c. 1350-1640," *Marriage and Society: Studies in the Social History of Marriage,* ed. R. B. Outhwaite (London: Europa Publications, 1981), 37)

[9] *The Lawes Resolutions of the Rights of Women* states,

> *Diversity of religion*

> Amongst the hindrances of marriage, note this also, that by constitution of holy church, marriage is forbidden betwixt persons of diverse religions, as Jews and Christians.
> (London: John More, 1632), Lib. II, Sect. XIII.

Other laws prohibited a woman from dissenting to her marriage if she were married after the age of 12. If married younger than this, she might dissent until the age of fourteen. A number of the laws concerning a woman's property rights were dependent upon the age at which she married (*Lawes*, Lib. I, Sect. XVIII-XIX, 33-34). Other restrictions on both men and women arose from the prohibited degrees of marriage, which were extended in 1536 to include affinity arising from "extra-marital intercourse as well as by a consummated marriage." Marriage to in-law relatives was also subject to restriction. (Sybil Wolfram, *In-Laws and Outlaws: Kinship and Marriage in England* (London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1987) 26-27). Finally, the English monarchs had in the past and sometimes still used in the sixteenth century their prerogatives to arrange or prevent marriages, thus restricting still further their subjects' rights to free consent (Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1558-1641* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965) 605).

[10] I have not come across any explicit legislation or church laws that restricted marriage to people of a different political persuasion or of a different colour. However, the laws restricting marriage with the unbaptized and with Jews, as well as those that prohibited association with the "dark" gypsies, who lived outside the political system, imply such restriction. Similarly, the sixteenth-century justification of slavery on the basis of religious and racial difference is evidence of the correspondence made between political status and race or religion (Hernán Santa Cruz, *Racial Discrimination*, rev. ed. (New York: The United Nations, 1976) 1). The effects of having a different religion had all sorts of implications on property rights and hence political status, such that politics and religion were inextricably tangled. From the thirteenth century, for example, it was forbidden to "gage" holdings to Jews. ((Paul R. Hyams, *King, Lords and Peasants in Medieval England: The Common Law of Villeinage in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980) 39). Similar restrictions on property rights existed for those born outside England.

[11] Ranald, 5. Canon 100 of the *Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical* of 1604 reads:

> No children vnder the age of one and twentie yeeres complete, shall contract themselves, or marrie without the consent of their Parents, or of their Guardians and Gouernours, if their Parents be deceased.
> (Church of England, *Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiasticall*, 1604, introd. and notes H. A. Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922) Canon C.)

[12] Ralph A. Houlbrooke, *The English Family: 1450-1700* (London and New York: Longman, 1984) 69.

[13] Ingram writes,

> . . . it seems to have been conventional wisdom that in normal circumstances children were duty-bound to marry only with the consent of their parents or other governors, who had the right to veto alliances which could be reasonably regarded as unsuitable. Likewise, it seems to have been conventionally

---

accepted, in cases where parents or others did take the initiative in urging a particular match, the individuals concerned should be allowed to reject the proposed union if they were opposed to it on reasonable grounds (49).

[14] An employer might do the same. The rights of servants to choose freely their spouse were limited by their having to seek permission from their masters; sometimes, too, in cases where the master had impregnated his maidservant she would be forced to marry the man of his choice, as in the 1590s case of Elizabeth Purkey (ctd. in Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988) 71).

[15] Ingram, 50.

[16] Ranald, 139.

[17] Alfred, c. 42, 7 (*E.D.H.* p. 380; Lieberman, I, 89) ctd. in Jean Scammell, "Freedom and Marriage in Medieval England," *The Economic History Review* , 2nd. series, XXVII: 4 (1974) 532.

[18] Scammell, 534. See also Eleanor Searle, "Freedom and Marriage in Medieval England: An Alternative Hypothesis," *The Economic History Review* 2nd. series, XXIX (1976) 482-6 and Scammell's response, "Wife-Rents and Merchet," in the same source, 487ff.

[19] Such relationships also existed in other societies. See Hans Julius Wolff, *Written and Unwritten Marriages in Hellenistic and Postclassical Roman Law* (Haverford, PA: American Philological Association, 1939) 31. As in the society of the Kiway Papuans, where "wives of the 'big men'" have a certain standing in the community, so wives of the "big men" of England certainly enjoyed greater status simply by token of their marriage (Gunnar Landtman, *The Origin of the Inequality of Social Classes* (New York: Greenwood, 1968; first published 1938) 20). In early English law free women lost their freedom if they married unfree men (Hyams, 206).

[20] Stone, *The Crisis,* 632-45. Alan Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love in England: Modes of Reproduction 1300-1840* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986) 272-4.

[21] Qtd. in Ralph Houlbrooke, ed., *English Family Life, 1576-1716: An Anthology from Diaries* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988) 31.

[22] Vivien Brodsky Elliott, "Single Women in the London Marriage Market: Age, Status and Mobility, 1598-1619," *Marriage and Society: Studies in the Social History of Marriage,* ed. R. B. Outhwaite (London: Europa Publications, 1981) 91.

[23] A number of authors comment on the unusual liberty accorded English women. Thomas Platter, for example, remarked that English women "have far more liberty than in other lands, and know just how to make good use of it, for they often stroll out or drive by coach in very gorgeous clothes, and the men must put up with such ways, and may not punish them for it." He continues, “One woman might have some ten men in marriage, no matter whether they were brothers or relatives” (*Thomas Platter's Travels in England, 1599,* trans. Clare Williams (London: Jonathan Cape, 1937) 181-2.

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[24] Whereas in the London of 1500 "nearly one in ten of the male population" was an "alien", the proportion of foreigners to natives was raised in 1540 to about "one in six" (Joyce Youings, *The Pelican Social History of Britain: Sixteenth-Century England* (London: Penguin, 1984) 128. Accounts relating to Africans and gypsies suggest their number was likewise increasing in London at this time. (Queen Elizabeth complained in 1601 about the too large number of blacks (Eldred Jones, *Othello's Countrymen* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965) 12-13). Gypsy "invasions" of England are described by two sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century authors, William Harrison in his *A Description of England* (prefixed to Holinshed's *Chronicle*, London, 1587), book 2, ch. 10, and Samuel Rid, in *The Art of Jugglingor Legerdemain* (London, 1612). Angus Fraser gives other evidence too that the gypsy population in England increased in the sixteenth century (*The Gypsies* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) 114). Further indication of the increased presence of "aliens" are the riots that occurred in London against foreigners in the 1580s and 90s (Ann Jennalie Cook, *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London, 1576-1642* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981) 256).

[25] J. E. Neale, *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments: 1584-1601* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1971; first published 1957) 90-91. The sale of wards' marriage rights meant that frequently they were forced to marry whoever paid most to the custodian of their right to marry. As members of the merchant class could move into the aristocracy by making such purchases, the wards might be paired off with someone of lower rank and thus be disparaged. Both practices contravened the ward's traditional rights -- to free consent and to be protected from disparagement.

[26] A., *The Passionate Morrice* (London: Richard Jones, 1593) 13, 6.

[27] Leonard Tennenhouse, "Family Rites: City Comedy and the Strategies of Patriarchalism," in *New Historicism and Renaissance Drama,* ed. and introd. Richard Wilson and Richard Dutton (London and New York: Longman Critical Readers, 1992) 195-206.

[28] Stephen Orgel, "Prospero's Wife," *Representing the English Renaissance,* ed. Stephen Greenblatt (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1988) 222.

[29] Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, eds., *The Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism* (Manchester: Manchester United Press, 1985); John Alvis and Thomas G. West, eds., *Shakespeare as Political Thinker* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 1981).

Chapter 2

A Class Dimension: Bedding and Breeding in *All's Well That Ends Well*

All's Well That Ends Well raises questions about the boundaries of marital consent by relating these boundaries to another limit on Elizabethan conceptions of freedom, that of class. In its differences from its most probable sources, this most controversial of Shakespeare's plays[1] exposes the restraints put on marital consent for reasons of class and economic status. The inversion in *All's Well* of some literary conventions as well as of some rituals traditionally associated with courtship and marriage is another element that enables the play to highlight attitudes on the relationship between birth and consent. But the characteristic of *All's Well* which makes these attitudes most conspicuous is its dialogue's questioning of the idea that rights may legitimately be bestowed by birth alone. Susan Amussen in *An Ordered Society* and Lawrence Stone in *The Crisis of the Aristocracy* point out that although in the period when this play was composed the English class system was still flaunting its "inequality of opportunity based on the accident of birth, arrogant self-confidence, . . . paternalist and patronizing attitude towards economic dependents and inferiors, and . . . acceptance of the grinding poverty of the lower classes as part of the natural order of things," there were, nevertheless, movements stirring that in the mid-seventeenth century would destabilize this order.[2] While Stone follows this change through a study centred on the "three elites" of English society, the "social elite," the "elite of wealth," and the "power elite," Amussen's work traces it through an analysis of English family and village life; both of them always take note of the intimate connection between family and class, marriage and politics.[3] Part of the movement that would in time destablilize and change the constituents of English hierarchy was the advance of the people of the lower ranks into positions that corresponded in many ways with those occupied by the aristocracy. Marital consent was one of the pivots on which this movement depended, because through marriage members of a lower rank could enter the aristocracy or at least gain property enabling them to acquire an economic status equivalent to that of the aristocracy. Those in the aristocracy sought to prevent these changes and thus stabilize their own position by the acquisition of greater wealth through marrying among themselves. In Bertram and Helena's case, the marriage proposed does not fit this latter condition, because Helena is poor and of a lower rank than Bertram. Without wealth, there is no bridge for Helena to cross the gap from her “lowly physician's" class to Bertram's "noble" class.

Many of the recent commentators on this play perceive in it issues of class. Jay Haylo interprets the play as representing the establishment of a new order and Helena's "carrying" of "Bertram's unborn child" as "the ever-new and ever-unchanging miracle of regeneration through which the nobility of Rossillon and bourgeois excellence join in final synthesis."[4] Roger Warren underlines "the constantly emphasized contrast in rank between Helena and Bertram."[5] David Palmer aligns Shakespeare's emphasis on Helena's superiority and strong will with Protestant exaltation of the lower class and of individual responsibility.[6] For David Berkeley and Donald Keesee, whose thesis focuses on "Bertram's Blood-Consciousness," *All's Well* "is an oddity in that it presents an enforced marriage between armigerous persons [that is, persons of different social ranks]."[7] It presents "a warning to a class that has grown too complacent in its demands for absolute power," says Susan Bassnett-McGuire in her article "An Ill Marriage In An Ill Government."[8] She relates this theme to consent and freedom in marriage and to the play's "analysis of the complexities of the post-Reformation views of the marriage contract vis-à-vis the State." M. C. Bradbrook states that *All's Well* "illustrates the nature of social distinctions, of which the personal situation serves only as an example."[9] Her statement that "By making his social climber a woman, Shakespeare took a good deal of the sting out of the situation"[10] points to the impingement of gender questions on those which concern class (and vice-versa) and hints at the complexity which must be faced in any attempt to unravel Shakespeare's representation of consent in this play. Susan Wolfson finds it noteworthy that it is Helena, a woman, who challenges the traditional concepts of class:

> It is significant . . . that although the world of *All's Well* is politically dominated by a king who strikes Bertram and his critical defenders as tyrannical, Shakespeare still represents this as a world of considerable female power: the king's actual physical power and social authority are restored by Helena's enterprises; and women's alliances prove effective. Moreover, it is the women, rather than the legally empowered men, who are more likely to contest the dispositions of nature and fate in social privilege and to advance a case for individual merit. . . .[11]

In an article entitled "'As Marriage Binds, and Blood Breaks': English Marriage and Shakespeare," Margaret Ranald draws attention to what could be the King's abuse of Bertram's rights if he were a subject of English law. She notes that Bertram has a right to free consent in marriage and, as a ward of the King, he has the right not to be "disparaged," that is, not to be given in marriage to one of a lower class.[12]

While these latter critics relate the issue of class to the representation of either male consent or female decision-making, the project of this essay -- the exploration of both female and male consent as impinged upon by Shakespeare's portrayal of class in *All's Well* -- has yet to be attempted. As a first step, I will consider how the conflicts about consent, both male and female, raised in the play fit into the context of the definition of free consent in marriage given in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As this definition entails that "Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses,"[13] the freedom of one party is necessarily limited by the freedom of the other; that is, if one party wills to marry and found a family with another party, he or she is not free to do so unless the other party also freely consents. Although the principles of free consent in marriage promulgated in The Universal Declaration of Human Rights were obviously not recognized under English law in Shakespeare's time, the principle that the parties should consent to their marriage had been a part of Church law since medieval times.[14] While this tradition was limited by the other more enforced tradition that children must obey their parents,[15] many of Shakespeare's audience would have recognized Bertram's right to refuse a partner who was repugnant to him. Therefore, no matter how much Helena willed to marry and found a family with Bertram, her fulfillment of this desire would not necessarily be considered legitimate by all the society if Bertram did not desire the same.

This outlook has important implications in Shakespeare's portrayal of Helena as a heroine despite her promotion of an action viewed at the time (and more so today) as illegal. But all this must be considered with the knowledge that in Shakespeare's time forced marriages were condoned in other forms, namely when the parents and guardians were the enforcers and, in some quarters, when the male spouse-to-be was the coercive one. Even when the two parties freely consented there were often further consents that had to be sought, most importantly that of the father. But employers also exercised power over their employees' personal status.[16] Because Bertram is a ward of the King, many Elizabethans would have seen the curtailment by the King of his right to free consent as legitimate, though not necessarily fair. Lawrence Stone notes in his history *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800,*

> It is significant that up to 1640 the landed classes continued to endure, although with increasing discontent, the practice of wardship, by which the marriages of young fatherless heirs and heiresses of landed properties were put up for sale by the Crown.[17]

It was therefore common for guardians (and parents) to arrange marriages to which the children were obligated to consent. Nevertheless, although at the time the play was written such curtailment of the right to consent was legal, it was a subject of political controversy. Howard Cole explains that the practice of the sale of wards' marriages by their guardians goes back to the feudal practice in which the lord held the right of consent for any female whose deceased father's lands were under his protection.[18]

This practice was later extended to male wards and, in Shakespeare's time, the rights of royal wards were commonly sold without their consent.[19] Lafew's remark, "I will buy me a son-in-law in a fair, and toll for this" -- after he has heard Diana's claim concerning Bertram's promise to marry her and when he is no longer interested in having him as his son-in-law -- refers to such sales. The widespread abuse of wardship led to Parliamentary debate on the subject, "about the same time," Cole remarks, "as the play's first performance."[20] The debate then raging, both in regard to enforced marriages in general and concerning the sale of wards' marriages, would have provided an added challenge to any author seeking to present those usurping these rights as protagonists. Both Helena and the King in some measure infringe on Bertram's rights and at the same time are exemplars of these long-standing but debated practices; therefore their roles in relation to Shakespeare's representation of marital consent are complex.

Their characterizations as well as those of other figures in *All's Well* are further complicated by two factors related to the English class system. Just as the right to free consent in marriage as defined in the Universal Declaration is not limited by "race, nationality or religion," neither is it limited by class.[21] However, in Shakespeare's era this was far from being accepted. Stone notes that even as late as the nineteenth century "cross-class marriages were universally condemned in theory and very rare in practice."[22] He further notes that "So far as parents were concerned, giving their children free mate-choice was predicated upon the assumption that the choice would be restricted to children of persons of the same rank and fortune."[23] Alan Macfarlane in *Marriage and Love in England, 1300-1840* states that wealth was a primary factor in a man's choice of partner.[24] The audience at Shakespeare's time, then, would not generally have favoured a marriage between a poor physician's daughter and the son of a wealthy nobleman, like Bertram. Such an attitude would have been further supported by their familiarity with the English law which prohibited guardians from arranging any marriage entailing the disparagement of a ward.[25]

What do the changes that Shakespeare made to the sources of *All's Well* tell about the play's representation of consent and its relation to class? The most extensive study of its sources is Howard Cole's *The* All's Well *Story from Boccaccio to Shakespeare* (1981). Other commentaries have discussed Scottish and oriental sources of the plot,[26] Biblical and legendary sources of the bed trick,[27] "Paracelsian *magia naturalis*" as the source of the cure episode,[28] Calvinist sources of Lavache's speech,[29] historical sources to the discussions on the wars,[30] and biographical sources to the plot which are similar to those suggested by the sonnets.[31] The most widely accepted source for *All's Well* is William Painter's English rendition of the tale of Giletta di Nerbona recounted by Chaucer's contemporary, Boccaccio, in the *Decameron*.[32] Since this latter source has the most numerous and obvious connections with *All's Well*, I will limit my discussion of the changes Shakespeare made to a comparison between this story and his play.

In her collection of the sources of Shakespeare's plays entitled *Shakespear Illustrated* (1753), Charlotte Lennox makes a number of comments on the differences between *All's Well* and its main source. As her comments are critical of Shakespeare's treatment of the idea of consent, they provide an interesting framework for my own discussion. She describes the changes Shakespeare made to Boccaccio's tale as "useless and disagreeable" "Excresences."[33] The first change she objects to is "The supposed Death" of Helena which, she says, "produces nothing but a few Ambiguities in the Dialogue, which are far from entertaining, and a base Suspicion of the Count's having murdered her, which he bears with a Tameness unbecoming the Character of a brave Soldier and a haughty Nobleman."[34] As shall be seen in my discussion of Shakespeare's inversion of courtship rites in *All's Well*, these very elements are necessary for such an inversion. But they are also factors in the construction of contrasts between the central male and female figures of the play who are also the main representatives of the noble and working classes. When he is accused of murder and is unsuccessful in his self-defense, Bertram projects the opposite image of a male character from the noble class. That he finally accedes to the will of the central female figure, who occupies a rank well below his, further situates him away from the stereotyped nobleman. The other part of this, of course, is Helena's success in securing a willing consent and submission from the man she loves, although she has neither social, nor economic, nor political status, desirable to him.

The second major objection that Lennox has to the changes Shakespeare made to Boccaccio's tale is that, while in Boccaccio "the Reconciliation between the Count and his Lady is very natural and affecting," "in Shakespear it is lost amidst a Croud of perplexing and, in my Opinion, Uninteresting Circumstances."[35] Though Lennox stresses the esteem won by Giletta's wise and capable management of her husband's domain, an examination of Painter's translation of Boccaccio's text reveals a number of other characteristics that might have suggested to her the idea that the reconciliation in the source of *All's Well* is more "natural and affecting." Boccaccio's story implies an audience of women who are interested in sex, motherhood, marriage, female solidarity and social status. His emphasis on these aspects of the story is indicated by his report that Giletta was "with the companye of her husbande" "many other times so secretly, as it was never knowen" until the time came that "she perceived herselfe with child,"[36] and by his talk about "Jewels" and money given either by Beltramo to Giletta in return for his sexual enjoyment or by Giletta to the gentlewoman who wanted to use these resources to marry off her daughter. The mention of Beltramo's gift of fine clothing to Giletta when she is finally accepted as his wife further underlines the story's concern with social status and domesticity. The Italian author's narrative is also "natural and affecting" because of its setting and plot. For instance, Boccaccio sets their meeting place in Beltramo's own county, where all the inhabitants respect Beltramo and also know and admire Giletta. He sets the time on the day of a great religious festival, "the daye of All Sainctes," at which feast all the people look on their Count with pride and are gathered in a spirit of joy and fellowship. At the moment the Count is to be seated and is the object of the everyone's attention, Giletta comes forward with two sons who look "so like hym."[37] She prostrates herself at her husband's feet, begging him to accept her and keep his promise since she has fulfilled the conditions he demanded. Not only does Giletta beg her husband with the self-effacement of Griselda, all the ladies present also beg him to accept her. Boccaccio notes that the Count recognizes his likeness in the two sons. These actions construct Giletta as less wilful and more modest than Helena and Beltramo as more noble and dignified than Bertram -- both occupy the stereotypical situations of man and woman, aristocrat and his mate. The presence of two male children, whose appearance attests to the inheritance of their father's nobility, make it unthinkable for Beltramo not to accept his wife, because the production of male heirs will ensure the continuity of his family and the stability of that family's political status -- a prime concern of the stereotypical aristocrat. Under such circumstances, it would be impossible for Beltramo to deny Giletta further.

The difference in Shakespeare's ending, as observed by Lennox, is enormous; its general effect is the opposite of the effect of Boccaccio's, which tends to exalt the character of Beltramo. In Boccaccio's conclusion Beltramo

> abjected his obstinate rigour, causing her to rise up, and imbraced and kissed her, acknowledging her againe for his lawefull wyfe. And after he had apparelled her according to her estate, to the great pleasure and contentation of those that were there, and of al his other frendes, not onely that daye, but many others he kept great chere, and from that time forth hee loved and honoured her as his dere spouse and wyfe.[38]

This genteel image of Beltramo's final embrace of Giletta contrasts with the single sentence with which Shakespeare portrays Bertram's acceptance of Helena: "If she, my liege, can make me know this clearly / I'll love her dearly, ever, ever dearly" (5.3.309-10).[39] Such an ungenerous response is, however, consistent with the characterization of Bertram throughout the earlier scenes of the play's final act. First, although these scenes are set, like in Boccaccio's story, in the Count's domain and in his quarters, the purpose of the gathering is no holy celebration of saints, but the pardoning of Bertram by his King and the arrangement of another marriage for him. This event is introduced in a short humorous scene in which the Clown makes fun of Parolles's stink, foreshadowing the ridicule shortly to be made of Bertram's sexual misdeeds and his lies about them and about Helena's ring. When Lafew enters in the same scene, Parolles complains that he is a poor victim of Fortune and dependent upon Lafew's grace to be brought back into society, a plea to which the magnanimous Lafew responds positively. Here again may be seen a foretaste of Bertram's situation, when he gives as an excuse for his adultery, Diana's "inf'nite cunning" and "modern grace" (5.3.215), and when despite his unworthiness is forgiven and welcomed back to the society of both his government (the King) and his family (Helena).

As noted by Lawrence and others,[40] the effect of these events and the play's conclusion is to demean Bertram and exalt Helena. The accusation of murder made by the King and Bertram's arrest, however brief, brings him down and raises Helena even further. These changes Shakespeare made to Boccaccio's story make Helena's exaggerated claim to an exaggerated freedom of consent more acceptable. On the other hand, they also keep the reader aware of the question of free male consent and free marital consent in general. Is Bertram only consenting because he is ashamed, or because his contract has been fulfilled? It would seem that whether he or Helena is being forced to consent is not as important as the fact that the final agreement is not lavish in its affection. The brevity of Bertram's response might leave us wondering whether or not they really love each other. After Bertram's lies can Helena still love him? After Helena's trick can Bertram love her? The repeated words "dearly, ever, ever dearly" imply a real reformation in Bertram and a sincere affection, and the briefness of his response is characteristic -- he is inarticulate throughout most of the play. Yet this briefness and the abrupt ending of affectionate expressions here offer us the opportunity to question whether at this stage either Helena or Bertram really have a choice.

Shakespeare makes other changes to Boccaccio's story that construct Bertram as hypocritical and dishonest. In Boccaccio Beltramo's relationship with the gentlewoman's daughter (who is not named) is recounted in great brevity. We are simply told that Giletta hears that he is "marvelously in love" with "a gentlewoman, verye poore and of small substance, nevertheless of right honest life and good report, and by reason of her poverty was yet unmaried, and dwelte with her mother, that was a wise and honest Ladye."[41] Indeed, in this tale it is not the Count who proposes a liaison but the gentlewoman's mother herself, upon the instigation of Giletta who advises her thus:

> . . . when he sendeth the ringe, you shal give it unto me, and afterwards sende him woorde, that your doughter is readie to accomplishe his pleasure, and then you shall cause him secretelye to come hither, and place me by him (instead of your doughter).[42]

In Shakespeare's work, Bertram hypocritically pleads to Diana his integrity -- "Change it, change it. / Be not so holy-cruel; love is holy; / And my integrity ne'er knew the crafts / That you do charge men with" -- and pledges himself and his will to her -- "My house, mine honour, yea, my life be thine, / And I'll be bid by thee" (4.2.31-34, 51-52). He makes this promise to a person whose economic status seems to be below Helena's, but whose birth rank is higher. Diana's mother's status as widow and Mariana's warning, "the honour of maid is her name, and no legacy is so rich as honesty," suggest that she is poor and, therefore, might be tempted to give in to the "French earl" for economic reasons (3.5.11-12). The occupation of the widow as pilgrim host and her acceptance of the three thousand crowns and purse of gold for her daughter's dowry are further evidence of their poverty (3.7.14, 35). However, the widow claims to be "well born" though her "estate be fall'n" and Diana later mentions that she is "Derived from the ancient Capilet" (3.7.5; 5.3.158). To one of a different land, of smaller fortune, but of higher class, than Helena, Bertram offers what Helena has demanded -- his name, his body, and his obedience. His later lies to the King in Diana's regard -- "Let your highness / Lay a more noble thought upon mine honour / Than for to think that I would sink it here" imply, however, that he has judged Diana's birth by her economic situation (5.3.178-80). Might not Helena's ancestors also have been well born and then had their estate fallen too? If Bertram cannot recognize good blood in Diana, does it really have any significance? Questions such as these raised by the disparity between Diana's economic status and her birth complicate Bertram's position and the representation of consent in the play. That Bertram treats Diana with the same disdain as Helena suggests that the idea of class is just a fiction and as such should not impinge on the freedom of consent. As his class bias is shown to have no foundation, this latter view, which is Helena's, achieves ground. The constant reference to class and Bertram's floating relations with members of different classes and his inaccurate and changing conception of the class to which his women belong presents a contrast to Beltramo's relationship with Giletta in Boccaccio's tale. Giletta's status doesn't change, nor does Beltramo refuse her for reasons of class. She has no opinion about inter-class marriage, nor does Beltramo seem to.

There are a few more additions in Shakespeare's version of the story that further this process. Although the audience knows of his easy relationship with Diana and has seen no evidence of a prior affection for Maudlin, Bertram eagerly embraces Maudlin's father's offer of her hand and claims to have loved her long ago. The length of his speech accepting this new proposal (12 lines: 5.3.44-55) is only surpassed by his dismissal of Helena to home (15 lines: 2.5.57-71). Shakespeare's citizen Mariana creates a similar view of Bertram. Mariana warns Diana that Bertram and Parolles have "seduced . . . many a maid" (3.5.20). That Bertram so freely consents to other liaisons and marriages undermines the significance of his right to free consent to marriage with

Helena and, hence, makes her will to marry and live with him against his will seem more legitimate. It also makes his disparagement by the King appear less problematic. The uncomplimentary comments made about Bertram throughout the play by his mother, the King, Lafew, Lavache and even his companion Parolles are all additions to Boccaccio's tale, the effect of which is to lower the spectators' esteem for Bertram. As for the effects of these changes on the representation of female consent in the play, it would seem that some legitimacy is being given to women's freely choosing their partners without regard to class difference, at least if the man is of a higher rank.

Nevertheless, this deduction is not made without reservation; another reading of Bertram's characterization is that it suggests a permissive attitude towards the practices of disparagement and enforced consent, practices of the higher class and merchant class that Parliament was at that epoch debating. Ranald observes that the duties of the guardian included the "mental and moral" education of his ward, "taking care to prevent wastage by rapacious relatives or the inexperienced minor himself," and the "arrangement" of a suitable marriage . . . in terms of age, rank, and wealth."[43] But these duties were entirely neglected when the guardians or the crown sold the rights of their wards in the market to the highest bidder. Lawrence Stone comments in *The Crisis of the Aristocracy* that the Tudors had instituted a "Court of Wards . . . to sell to individuals the Crown's rights over the minor's person and one-third of his lands. The child could be bought from the Court, either to be married to one of the purchaser's own children or to be auctioned to the mother or to another."[44] J. E. Neale, author of the history, *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments: 1584-1601,* observes that practices hardly distinguishable from slavery resulted from this institution.[45] Despite the stipulation that "the right to marry the ward to whomever the guardian chose" was conditioned on the marriage being "without disparagement,"[46] members of the merchant class found that through such purchases they could get entry into the aristocracy for their daughters or sons. In the resulting marriages those whom their children married considered themselves disparaged, or brought down to a lower rank. Cole thus writes that "Bertram's opening remark about being 'now in ward, evermore in subjection' would have suggested nothing good to Shakespeare's audience."[47]

Bertram's character, however, invites little sympathy, although he frequently observes that he has not only been disparaged but his right to free consent has been denied. For example, when the King tells him to take Helena as his wife, he answers, "I shall beseech your highness, / In such a business give me leave to use / The help of mine own eyes" (2.3.106-8). A few lines later the King rebuffs Bertram for his refusal to try to love Helena: "Thou wrong'st thyself if thou shouldst strive to choose" (2.3.146); and finally he forces him to accept her by giving her title and threatening him (2.3.149-66). Nor does Shakespeare let go the idea; Diana reports to Helena that "He stole from France, / As 'tis reported, for the king had married him / Against his liking" (3.5.52-54) and Bertram tells Diana "I was compell'd to her, but I love thee" (4.2.15). The situation of forced consent is paradoxically reversed when Maudlin's arrangements are made and unmade by her father and Bertram without even her presence. When the King announces that "The main consents are had" (5.3.69), we know of only two -- one partner's and one guardian's, in this case a father. These, of course, are all additions to Boccaccio's work that keep the question of consent in the forefront. However, they do not seem to privilege male consent in particular, or Bertram's right not to be disparaged. While his choice of Diana might be seen as adequate and therefore promoting his right to choose, his participation in the Maudlin scheme in which it may be suspected that she has not been consulted makes him appear hypocritical and insincere, such that the King's choosing him his wife seems more legitimate. Ranald notes that "The King errs . . . in insisting on the young man's unwilling consent through reverential fear (*per metus reverentialis*), using threats that would strike fear into the heart of a strong man (*metus qui posset in virum constantem cadere*) . . . to force Bertram into a defective consent, creating an impediment that could be invoked to dissolve the union, even if it were later consummated. . ."[48] Despite the truth of this observation in the light of English law, when it is balanced against the play's representation of marriage between classes, the latter seems to be given precedence. Still, the addition of the idea of disparagement and forced male consent to the plot and dialogue distinguishes Shakespeare's work from Boccaccio's, as does its emphasis on class.

The features of Shakespeare's Helena that make her different from Boccaccio's Giletta may also have implications for reading the representation of female consent in *All's Well* and the impingement of the question of class on its portrayal. Boccaccio's Giletta is "diligently lo[o]ked unto by her kinsfolke (because she was riche and fatherlesse)" and "refuses . . . manye husbandes with whom her kinsfolke woulde have matched her."[49] In Shakespeare our first encounters with Helena emphasize not riches or family care but her loss of an honest and competent father (1.1.16-18), her inherited "honesty" and achieved "goodness" (1.1.42), her solitude and sorrow (1.1.35, 43-50), her duty towards her father's reputation (1.1.75) and the unbrideable distance between her rank and that of Bertram for whom she has a crazy and ambitious love (1.1.83-96). Bertram's liar comrade Parolles expands on her infatuation with Bertram in a discussion with her about virginity. In that dialogue Helena looks for ways to control her passion, while at the same time she expresses regret that she is not free to give it legitimate expression:

> That wishing well had not a body in't
> Which might be felt, that we, the poorer born,
> Whose baser stars do shut us up in wishes,
> And show what we alone must think, which never
> Returns us thanks.
> (1.1.177-82)

In Boccaccio Giletta does not consider whether or not her passion for Beltramo is legitimate; she does not fight it. And no mention is made of a difference in rank. From the observations already made about Elizabethan attitudes to inter-class marriage, it seems that the audience viewing *All's Well* would have had mixed, if not mainly unfavourable, feelings about a marriage such as that between Helena and Bertram -- between members of different classes.[50] Helena's own voicing of concern over this problem could be seen as a way of dispelling such feelings. Why did Shakespeare make this gap in their rank? Could it be that such a situation reflected Elizabethan society? Certainly, in her article "Single Women in the London Marriage Market: Age, Status and Mobility, 1598-1619" Vivien Brodsky Elliott reports a few cases of servant women marrying their masters and that, more numerous, "Forty per cent of migrant daughters of yeomen married gentry and high status tradesmen husbands in London."[51] Ann Leclercle sees Helena's desire as one of many transgressions in the play which, like fistulas, allow communication between parts that should be separate[52] and Albert Carter sees the play's interweaving of "the themes of honor, desert, and service" a means of heightening "our appreciation of Bertram's dilemma."[53] These contradictory observations and the preceding discussion do not altogether address the question of why Shakespeare made class such a dominant element in *All's Well*; possibly a look at the play's inversion of rituals, both literary and of life, may take us a step further.

The conventional literary paradigm of courtship entailed a beautiful and virtuous woman of excellent lineage wooed by a brave, faithful and adventurous man, whose devotion to his love was so religious that it blinded him to her faults and made him ever ready to suffer death in her path.[54] Before he attained her hand, he had to pass through stages of lovesickness and ordeal.[55] This courtship pattern is inverted in *All's Well*: Helena, a woman, woos a man of high lineage and undergoes both lovesickness and ordeal before she is able to win his heart. The one wooed is not virtuous, but dishonest. As these words show, the one wrapt in blind devotion is Helena:

> Thus, Indian-like,
> Religious in mine error, I adore

> The sun that looks upon his worshipper
> But knows of him no more.
> (1.3.199-202)

In courtly love, the woman often disdained her lover, but he was expected to continue his wooing and she would bestow her affections on him when he had undergone great suffering for her sake and had shown himself ready to die for her. In *All's Well* it is Helena who acts out this romance: She is rudely disdained by Bertram. She suffers the indignity of being sent home and of receiving an impossible task to perform. In her care that he not absent himself from Rossillion because of her hated presence, she prepares to meet danger and death for his sake:

> Better 'twere
> I met the ravin lion when he roar'd
> With sharp constraint of hunger; better 'twere
> That all the miseries which nature owes
> Were mine at once. No; come though home,
> Rossillion,
> Whence honour but of danger wins a scar,
> As oft it loses all; I will be gone. . .
> (3.2.116-22)

Finally, just as the knights in the romances of old won their ladies' hands by accomplishing impossible tasks set for them, so Helena wins Bertram by accomplishing the impossible task he has set for her -- to obtain his ring from his finger and "show him a child begotten of her body that he is father to" (3.2.56-59).

Another paradigm which is relevant to *All's Well* is that of the comedic marriage plot. While there are a number of marriage comedy forms, one of the most common has these features: The young have some problem over love, of which the cause is usually an older person, often the father or guardian of the girl. The problem is resolved by some trick played by a servant or go-between. The ending is a happy marriage.[56] In *All's Well* this pattern of comedy is turned around. The impediment to the marriage is the male partner; it is he who is suspected of murder. Consequently, there is no murder of the male wooer, as is usual, but a suspected murder of a female wooer. Moreover, the conflict is not presented by elders; the older people in the play --

the King and the Countess -- try to promote the marriage and in the end are rewarded with success. Though the aspect of trick is present, it is not played on the elderly but on one marriage partner by the other marriage partner, and the happiness of the marriage at the end is somewhat uncertain.

Not only are the literary conventions of love and comedy upset, social, psychological and philosophical paradigms are too. It appears that in the period of *All's Well's* composition rape was quite frequently carried out by men in order to force marriage on the women they wanted, because in 1597 a law was passed punishing such action with death.[57] Having Helena perform the bed-trick in order to force marriage on Bertram turns this real-life practice upside down, perhaps drawing attention by its very oddity to the situation in society more frequently faced by women than by men. Helena's confidence in her own ability inverts another of the society's conventions:

> Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie,
> Which we ascribe to heaven; the fated sky
> Gives us free scope; only doth backward pull
> Our slow designs when we ourselves are dull.
> What power is it which mounts my love so high,
> That makes me see, and cannot feed mine eye?
> (1.2.212-17)

Here the traditional view that woman is "naturally" feeble-minded, slow, and weak-willed is upset. This passage also inverts the traditional philosophy that freedom is opposed to destiny. The words "the fated sky / Gives us free scope" imply that people are destined to exercise free will, whereas the passage which follows, "only doth backward pull / Our slow designs when we ourselves are dull," suggests that the non-use of this "natural" freedom is a result of our own stupidity and choice. The combination of "fated" with "free scope" suggests an enormous paradox -- that freedom and determination are one. In such a philosophy, Bertram's choice of Helena must be his only truly free choice that he reaches through his fate. Helena, too, reaches hers through her heaven-assisted cure of the King, though she has freely planned the whole scheme. Finally, the contrast between the action of the play and its title may incite a questioning of people's usual concern for result rather than means and hence may impel the spectator to consider whether the means and not the end is important. The flat declaratory tone of the title reflects the complacency of a society traditionally not very concerned about the means to marriage, the female and male consents being one part of these means. The emphasis on "end" in the title juxtaposed with the all too brief glimpse of the end given in the play again points the audience to process. All these inversions or twists, as when we turn a picture upside down, make us look at the parts rather than the whole, the means rather than the end.

What connection do these inversions have with Shakespeare's representation of female consent and male consent in *All's Well* and the play's class question? First, they draw attention to the rites associated with marriage -- the parts and means of a marriage. One ritual current in Elizabethan society was a matching of class. By making the good, the beautiful, and the wise party to the proposed marriage from the lower class and the dishonest, fickle and stupid partner a member of the higher class, the play draws attention to the inanity of this ritual. On the other hand, that the desiring one is from the lower class and from the female gender, and that it is a lower class female who enacts the transgression of this ritual, suggests that Shakespeare might have been consciously trying to avoid arousing the sensibilities of the higher class -- because women were expected to transgress in this way more than men. This observation, however, is inadequate to answer why he made this female member of the lower class so attractive. Another ritual of the age was the obtaining of consent from employer, guardian, parent or sovereign, in the case where the king or queen had been given this right. As mentioned earlier, in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and in earlier times it had been the custom to sell these rights, so that in effect someone quite unconcerned with the party to the marriage had the right to bestow or not bestow that party in marriage. The other complication relating to this ritual was the difference in the minds of the older members of society who effectively held right of consent and the younger members who were the parties to the marriage. That it is the elders in this play who promote the marriage, and more particularly the female will, draws attention to the social pressures which constitute a major part of any rite of passage; it perhaps suggests the unwisdom in those elders who obstruct this will, which is in fact of benefit to society. However, the forcing of the male to concede to the female may also be viewed as reinforcing certain rituals. Henri Suhamy, for example, sees in Helena a symbol of the anthropological origin of marriage which, he predicates, entailed that women by reason of their stronger passion and interest in perpetuating the species invented love and marriage.[58] Shakespeare may have had other reasons for making the lower class female the forceful agent in this marriage. First, the crisis created by Helena's strong desire and Bertram's aversion validates the strong passions about marriage felt by both parties; in particular it gives voice to the female desire and shows the power of female will. The difference in class tends to accentuate the representation of these passions. Second, it emphasizes the necessity of mutual consent. It especially draws attention to the inhumanity of forcing consent on the female; by putting a male in the position that was more frequently in the past the position of the female, the play demands that the audience consider the principle of the matter as it affects the female. Third, it suggests that the consent of the parties to the marriage is a complex process, of which desire, social pressures, and self-knowledge are important parts. The other inversions have various effects. The idea that freedom and destiny are one undermines the importance of consent and points to the end rather than the process. However, the title juxtaposed with the drama points to process.

A look at some of *All's Well*'s dialogue will further elucidate the play's representation of free consent as it relates to class. Helena, the King and Bertram all attest that the main obstacle to Helena's freedom to take Bertram as husband is their difference in rank. At the same time, each one of their statements expressing recognition of the problem of class difference is undercut in some way. In her efforts to stifle her desire Helena declares:

> I am undone; there is no living, none,
> If Bertram be away; 'twere all one
> That I should love a bright particular star
> And think to wed it, he is so above me.
> In his bright radiance and collateral light
> Must I be comforted, not in his sphere.
> Th' ambition in my love thus plagues itself:
> The hind that would be mated by the lion
> Must die for love.
>
> (1.1.82-90)

For some of the audience Helena's blind esteem for Bertram's class and her self deprecation, both of which stem from her belief in the idea of inherited worth, may be undermined by her statement a few lines later: "full oft we see / Cold wisdom waiting on superfluous folly" (1.1.102-3). She means these words to refer to her intended use of Parolles to find a wise way to win Bertram, but for the audience they could also shed an ironic light on her unwarranted veneration for the foolish and shallow Bertram.

To Bertram's accusation that Helena "had her breeding at my father's charge" and is "a poor physician's daughter" whom to marry would be to corrupt himself, the King answers,

> 'Tis only title thou disdain'st in her, the which
> I can build up. Strange is it that our bloods,
> Of colour, weight, and heat, pour'd all together,
> Would quite confound distinction, yet stands off
> In differences so mighty. If she be
> All that is virtuous, save what thou dislik'st --
> A poor physician's daughter -- thou dislik'st
> Of virtue for the name. . . .
>
> (2.3.117-24)

The King understands Bertram's reasons for "standing off" from Helena, but flatly names this reason as nothing but a label -- "name," "title," "mere word," "a lying trophy," as he repeats in the remainder of his speech (2.3.129, 131, 137, 139). He initially assimilates Bertram's desire for good breeding with honour and virtue. But at the end of this speech he mentions "dower" and "wealth," suggesting that behind Bertram's complaint is only petty greed (2.3.144). His recognition of the impediment to the marriage impels him to explain the insignificance of this impediment and hence undercut the idea of class as an important issue in marriage. When he then shows that class itself is an invention of the King, that he can as easily bestow on Helena as it was in the past bestowed on Bertram's family, its significance is disconfirmed. The idea in Helena's proverb ("The hind that would be mated by the lion / Must die for love") that rank is biological and therefore permanent is similarly invalidated by this clear statement of its purely legal genesis and hence its changeability.

Bertram's words and actions further reduce the significance of class in the eyes of the spectator. His hypocritical submission to the King's will, his trust in a known liar, his lascivious behaviour in Florence, his vain promises to Diana, his glee at Helena's death, his opportunistic engagement to Maudlin, his own lies to the King, and his final stingy, conditional words of acceptance to Helena, all mark him as more dishonourable than almost all members of the "lower" classes in Shakespeare's plays -- indeed "inhuman," to use the King's word (5.3.116). However, the effect of undermining both the concept of class and the honour of Bertram could be seen in more than one way, as it concerns Helena's will to marry Bertram. If class is meaningless and it is the only obstacle to their marriage put forward by Bertram, he should give it up and consent to respond to her consent. Seen in another way, however, their marriage is legitimized because Bertram is in effect not of his class but of Helena's or lower. He has failed to "succeed" his father "in manners as in shape!" as his mother wished (1.1.57-58), and has not, as the King exhorted him to, "inherited" his "father's moral parts" (1.2.21-22): He is equal to Helena and therefore fit to marry her.

Other parts of the dialogue project the same idea but in another way. Helena, first of all, is seen as absolutely trustworthy. Such an attribute was not, in Elizabethan times, generally attributed to either women or to people of the lower classes.[59] But the King sets her word above Bertram's, answering his claim that the ring on his finger was thrown out of a window to him from a noble lady, with a defense of her trustworthiness:

> . . . She call'd the saints to surety
> That she would never put it from her finger
> Unless she gave it to yourself in bed,
> Where you have never come, or sent it us
> Upon her great disaster.
> (5.3.108-112)

When the Countess hears the demand that Helena must fulfill before he will live with her, she disowns him and claims Helena as a person more fit to be of her family:

> He was my son,
> But I do wash his name out of my blood
> And thou art all my child. . . .
> (3.2.66-68)

A few minutes later, she repeats the last words of Bertram's demand and renews her praise of Helena and her disdain of him, calling him a "rude boy":

> Nothing in France until he have no wife!
> There's nothing here that is too good for him
> But only she, and she deserves a lord
> That twenty such rude boys might tend upon
> And call her, hourly, mistress. . . .
> (3.2.78-82)

Later she designates him "unworthy husband" (3.4.26). However, her idea that her son is of superior breeding may be seen to persist even in these testimonies to Helena's worth. That he had her own noble blood, in the sense of her character, she upholds -- how else might it be washed out? In seeing the corruption he feared from marriage with a physician's daughter as coming from his follower Parolles with whose "inducement" the Countess says her "son corrupts a well-derived nature," does she not suggest that his "naturally" good character was derived from his breeding? Later she states that his corrupted nature cannot be redeemed without his union with Helena:

> What angel shall
> Bless this unworthy husband? He cannot thrive,
> Unless her prayers, whom heaven delights to hear
> And loves to grant, reprieve him from the wrath
> Of greatest justice. . . .
> (3.4.25-29)

How does this presentation of class relate to Helena's freedom to choose him as a husband? Helena, now denoted by the King as one royal, by the Countess as "all my child," has acquired the status of Bertram in name, a status which in character she already possessed. Having fulfilled the prerequisites of the English marriage rite which insisted on boundaries between classes, she may freely choose Bertram. Her acquired breeding and her royally acquired honour and wealth give her this right. At first she is only "the name" of wife and "not the thing" (5.3.302). With Bertram's consent alone she will become his "natural" wife. Whether looked at from the play's undermining of the value of class in the dialogues of such major characters as the King or from the numerous statements in the play supporting the notion, the outcome tends towards an equalization of Bertram's and Helena's class so that they do not by their marriage truly transgress the English taboo against inter-class marriage. While this may be the main thrust of the play, there are passages which question this idea.

For example, both the dialogues between Parolles and the soldiers and a French lord (scene one of act four) and between the Countess and the clown (in scene two of act two) point to the contingency of birth and birth rights. The scene in which Parolles is ambushed by a French Lord and some soldiers might be interpreted as an allegory of the situation between the upper wealthy classes and the lower classes. The French Lord and his soldiers pretend not to speak Parolles' language -- "we must seem to understand him" says the Lord to the soldiers. The situation of the upper class is similar. They really do understand and know the needs and desires of the lower class, because these needs and desires are the same as their own; however, they pretend not to understand. Through the use of a mystical, strange reasoning fabricated to give an impression of power they manage the lower classes, as the French Lord and soldiers control Parolles by their gibberish and cause him to betray his own master. Parolles's statement "I shall lose my life for want of language," then, reflects their loss of a decent life with full rights, because they lack the language -- the wealth and the authority -- of the upper classes (4.1.70). As the soldier says to Parolles: "Haply thou may'st inform / Something to save thy life," so the poorer classes had to give up ever more of their livelihood and authority to the rich and powerful in order to maintain what life was given them (4.1.82-83). Such an allegorical interpretation might seem unusual to modern minds, but I think it would have been a feasible view at Shakespeare's time, given the custom of the Elizabethans, as of the people of the periods immediately preceding and subsequent to their era, of thinking of all stories and pictures and other art pieces as emblematic of ideas.

The idea that the noble do not understand the needs of the plebeian, or at least that they pretend not to, has already been hinted at in one of the early scenes of *All's Well,* in which the Clown asks the Countess's permission to breed -- to marry Isbel -- and she responds by asking him why he wishes to marry (1.3.25). In that dialogue, the first words of the Countess to the Clown open the subject of class and marriage: "Come on sir; I shall now put you to the height of your breeding" (2.2.1). As their conversation continues, the word "breeding" takes on a variety of nuances, from inheritance and marriage to education and character. Her jesting shows how she regards his breeding -- that of a good jester. His response to her words, "I will show myself highly fed and lowly taught. I know my business is but to the court" (2.2.3-4), suggests that those at court are "highly fed and lowly taught," that is, their breeding is only their wealth. The expression "highly fed and lowly taught" has been said to refer to the "children of wealthy parents, who are commonly saucy, insolent, and ill-natured" and cites these words as "a parody of the distinction between physical nurture and moral discipline so important in the play."[60] These words could also suggest that the Clown is telling his mistress that she feeds him well but has taught him poorly and therefore he is of lowly rank because of her. That is, poor people remain in their subordinate position only because of a teaching -- a custom passed on from generation to generation -- and not for any natural or biological trait that they possess. His words

"I know my business is but to the court" also play on the value of the court, suggesting that it has need of or is associated only with the badly taught. But the Countess interprets his statement as playful arrogance and infers by her statement that he has said that he is "special" because his "business is but to the court." To her question "Why, what place make you special when you put off that with such contempt?", he replies that "if God have lent a man any manners he may easily put it off at court" (2.2.5-9). The Countess's point about "contempt" refers to his earlier complaint about being "highly fed and lowly taught." The Clown's comments about manners and the statements that follow, like his last statement, can be understood in several ways: one, that outward manners are all that is needed to succeed at court; another, that one can do without real manners at court because all that is needed are obsequious motions -- "make a knee, kiss his hand" etc. His characterization of the court -- the place of the highest breeding -- as a place of ignorance and insincerity where form and money are all that secure position is, I believe, significant to a general thrust in the play related to class and marital consent. The Clown ends his response to the Countess's question with a second and contrasting answer: "for me, I have an answer will serve all men" (2.2.13). A few lines later he compares such an answer to "a barber's chair that fits all buttocks," perhaps suggesting the basic commonness of people (2.2.16). That he refers to an aspect of human physiognomy rather than mentality and that he refers to a part somehow connected to the idea of breeding hints at the equality of people from the point of view of nature. This statement could be seen as further undermining the idea that class is heritable and natural, expressed earlier in such statements of the King as this one to Bertram:

> Youth, thou bear'st thy father's face;
> Frank nature, rather curious than in haste,
> Hath well compos'd thee. Thy father's moral parts
> Mayest thou inherit too!
> (1.2.19-22)

When the Countess characterizes his answer as "of most monstrous size," she suggests it concerns only the lower classes; but the Clown answers, perhaps in reference to the court again and the upper classes, "But a trifle neither, in good faith, if the learned should speak truth of it" (2.2.33-34). His answer is "monstrous" because it invites the monster class -- the plebeians -- to take their seats beside members of the aristocracy. If his answer were given by one of the elite, it would still not be a trifle because it would effectively eliminate the pretentious belief in heritable superiority upon which they base their claims to power. Such an answer is given by the elite when the King himself later states that there is no significance in inherited title or biological difference in people bloods (2.3.120-4) -- hence "breeding" in these senses is valueless.

I was not sure of my own feelings about this play as it concerns marital consent and its relationship to class until I came across this Nigerian story in Chinua Achebe's essay "What Has Literature Got To Do With It?":

> One day a snake was riding his horse coiled up, as was his fashion, in the saddle. As he came down the road he met the toad walking by the roadside.
> 'Excuse me, sir,' said the toad, 'but that's not the way to ride a horse.'
> 'Really? Can you show me the right way, then?' asked the snake.
> 'With pleasure, if you will be good enough to step down a moment.' The snake slid down the side of his horse and the toad jumped with alacrity into the saddle, sat bolt upright and galloped most elegantly up and down the road. 'That's how to ride a horse,' he said at the end of his excellent demonstration.
> 'Very good,' said the snake, 'very good indeed; you may now come down.'
> The toad jumped down and the snake slid up the side of his horse back into the saddle and coiled himself up as before. Then he said to the toad, 'Knowing is good, but having is better. What good does fine horsemanship do to a fellow without a horse?' And then he rode away in his accustomed manner.[61]

Achebe goes on to explain that "The snake is an aristocrat in a class society in which status and its symbols are not earned but ascribed" -- like the society of Helena and Bertram.[62] "The toad," he says, "is a commoner whose knowledge and expertise garnered through personal effort count for nothing beside the merit which belongs to the snake by some unspecified right such as birth or wealth. No amount of brightness or ability on the part of the toad is going to alter the position ordained for him. The few but potent words left with him by the snake embody a stern, utilitarian view of education which would tie the acquisition of skills to the availability of scope for their practice."[63] The story of the Clown and the Countess in *All's Well* reflects this story, because the Clown is kept in his place despite his perception and wit. Parolles's ambushing, likewise, suggests a permanent condition of discrimination. But the story of Bertram and Helena, while it too reflects the story of the snake and the toad, is different, because ultimately the toad -- Helena -- remains on the horse. She permanently changes places with Bertram in the sense that she obtains the power to make him conform to her desire. She changes place with him in another sense too because, even though an equalization of the two may be observed from a certain standpoint, by the end she is given the attributes valued by the audience where Bertram is shorn of them. In Boccaccio's story, Giletta does not change places with Beltramo. He remains in the position of power from beginning to end, and Giletta who anyway is not of a lower class or lower economic status keeps her status and remains his subordinate. The change that Shakespeare makes to the story on which he based his play, then, significantly alters the representation of class. While it is true that the dialogue both questions and supports the idea of consent being dependent on class, the inversions of courtship and marriage rites and of some literary formulae seem to interrogate this idea more than promote it. My impression, therefore, is that *All's Well That Ends Well* takes a stronger stand for the freedom of consent, than it does against it. Helena's strong will has turned the horse of marital power in another direction.

Notes

[1] According to William Witherle Lawrence, "Critical explanations have nowhere shown wider divergence than in regard to this play, nor have the points at issue ever been so strongly marked." (*Shakespeare's Problem Comedies,* 2nd. ed. (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1960; First published 1931). 32). Peggy Muñoz Simonds finds its title "the most eschatological . . . in the entire Shakespeare canon" ("Sacred and Sexual Motifs in *All's Well That Ends Well*," *Renaissance Quarterly* 42: 1 (1989) 36).

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[2] Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1558-1641* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965) 8-10; Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988) 3-8. The quotation is from Stone, 9.

[3] Stone, *The Crisis*, 8; Amussen, 2-3.

[4] Haylo, Jay L. "All's Well That Ends Well." *Shakespeare Quarterly.* 15: 1(1964) 35, 42. Though her remarks do not explicitly relate to class, Lisa Jardine suggests a similar interpretation in her reading of Helena as "a kind of wish-fulfillment solution to the paradox of the two-faced learned lady -- a reconciliation of the opposed figurings of the educated woman as both symbol of civilization and social stability, and 'impudent' (a sexually disruptive force for social disorder" ("Cultural Confusion and Shakespeare's Learned Heroines: "These are old paradoxes," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 38:1 (1987) 12).

[5] Roger Warren, "Why Does It End Well? Helena, Bertram, and the Sonnets," *Shakespeare Survey.* 22 (1969) 85.

[6] D.J. Palmer, "Comedy and the Protestant Spirit in Shakespeare's *All's Well That Ends Well," Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, 71: 1 (1989) 100, 102.

[7] David S. Berkeley and Donald Keesee, "Bertram's Blood-Consciousness in *All's Well That Ends Well." Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 31: 2 (1991) 247.

[8] Susan Bassnett-McGuire, "An Ill Marriage In An Ill Government: Patterns of Unresolved Conflict in *All's Well That Ends Well," Shakespeare Jahrbuch,* 120 (1984) 102.

[9] M. C. Bradbrook, "Virtue is the True Nobility: A Study of the Structure of *All's Well that Ends Well," The Review of English Studies,* 1: 4 (1950) 290.

[10] Bradbrook, 297.

[11] Susan J. Wolfson, "Explaining Shakespeare to Her Sisters: Mary Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare," Women's Re-Visions of Shakespeare: On Responses of Dickinson, Woolf, Rich, H.D., George Eliot, and Others,* ed. Marianne Novy. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990, 33.

[12] Margaret Loftus Ranald, "'As Marriage Binds, and Blood Breaks': English Marriage and Shakespeare," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 30 (1979) 80.

[13] Paragraph 2 of Article 16 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Brownlie 24).

[14] See Michael Sheehan, "Choice of marriage partner in the Middle Ages: development and mode of application of a theory of marriage," *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History,* new ser. 1 (1978) 3-33. Speaking still in the context of the twelfth century Martin Ingram defines "a legally valid marriage" as "a contract in which the couple

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accepted each other as man and wife in words of the present tense (contract or spousals *per verba de praesenti*)" ("Spousals Litigation in the English Ecclesiastical Courts, c. 1350-1640," *Marriage and Society: Studies in the Social History of Marriage,* ed. R. B. Outhwaite (London: Europa Publications, 1981) 37). Christopher Brooke notes that "On the specific relation of consent of marriage, there is a characteristic canon of the Council of Westminster of 1175 which repeated an earlier text in revised form, stating that 'where there is no consent, there is no marriage', and went on to condemn marriage of children under the age of consent -- save in urgent necessity to preserve the peace" ("Marriage and Society in the Central Middle Ages," *Marriage and Society: Studies in the Social History of Marriage,* ed. R. B. Outhwaite (London: Europa Publications, 1981) 28).

[15] It appears that the parents' role was increasing in the Elizabethan era; Outhwaite notes that "the canons of 1604 . . . forbade marriage without parental consent for children under 21, and for the issue of marriage licences required the consent of parents irrespective of the age of the parties (unless they were in widowhood)" (Canons 100, 102-4, in Gibson, *Codex* , I, 421, 428-9, ctd. in Outhwaite, 48).

[16] An example of such power may be observed in Vivien Elliott's citation of Guildhall Manuscript 10, 091/1:8/12/1598: Bedcake-Bayley: "Her master, Mr. Edward Varnham, testified 'his free consent to the said marriage between the said Humphrey Bedcake and his said servant Margery Bayley. . . '" ("Single Women in the London Marriage Market: Age, Status and Mobility, 1598-1619," *Marriage and Society: Studies in the Social History of Marriage,* ed. R. B. Outhwaite. (London: Europa Publications, 1981).95).

[17] Stone, *The Family,* 182.

[18] Howard C. Cole, *The* All's Well *Story from Boccaccio to Shakespeare* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981) 95.

[19] Joel Hurstfield, *The Queen's Wards* (Cambridge University Press, 1958) 18.

[20] Cole, 95.

[21] Article 2 of the Declaration proclaims: "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status." (Brownlie 22).

[22] Stone, *The Family,* 394.

[23] Stone, *The Family,* 394.

[24] Alan Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love in England: Modes of Reproduction 1300-1840* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986) 164-5.

[25] Hurstfield, 89.

[26] See Lawrence.

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[27] See Peggy Muñoz Simonds, "Overlooked Sources of the Bed Trick," *Shakespeare Quarterly,* 34: 4 (1983) 433-4.

[28] In "Helena's Paracelsian Cure of the King: *Magia Naturalis* in *All's Well That Ends Well,*" J. Scott Bentley relates the heroine's remedy to early medical treatises. See *Cauda Pavonis.* 5: 1 (1986) 1-4.

[29] See Palmer.

[30] In "*All's Well That Ends Well* and Its Historical Relevance," Willem Schrickx traces the sources of various lines of the King's and the Lords' speeches to political events contemporary with the period in which the play was written. See *Multiple Worlds, Multiple Words,* ed. Hena Maes-Jelinek, Pierre Michel and Paulette Michel-Michot (Liège: University of Liège, English Department, 1987) 257-74.

[31] Warren suggests in his article that both the sonnets and *All's Well* reflect Shakespeare's own experience of love for an unfaithful friend of higher rank.

[32] Other possible sources include Bernardo Accolti's *La Virginia* and *Le Livre du Très Chevalereux Comte Artois.*

[33] Charlotte Lennox, *Shakespear Illustrated* (London: A. Millar, 1753) 190.

[34] Lennox, 190.

[35] Lennox, 190.

[36] William Painter, *The Palace of Pleasure.* rep. from 1575 ed. in *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare,* ed. Geoffrey Bullough, vol. 2 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958) 395.

[37] Painter, 396.

[38] Painter, 396.

[39] William Shakespeare, *All's Well That Ends Well,* ed. G.K. Hunter (London: Methuen (Arden), 1986) First published 1959. All further quotations are taken from this edition.

[40] Lawrence states that "The blackening of the character of Bertram is one of the most sweeping changes made by Shakespeare in the story as a whole" (62).

[41] Painter, 393.

[42] Painter, 394.

[43] Ranald, 79.

[44] Stone, *The Crisis,* 600-1.

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[45] J. E. Neale, *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments: 1584-1601* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1971; first published 1957) 90-91.

[46] Hurstfield, 89, qtd. in Cole 97.

[47] Cole, 96. He adds, quoting Hurstfield (18):

> Until well into the reign of Charles II, the plight of the ward remained substantially the same. He was usually a royal ward only in name, for his guardianship would soon be sold, usually to a complete stranger. So would "the right to offer him a bride whom he could rarely afford to refuse, for his refusal meant that he must pay a crushing fine to his guardian. Meanwhile his land would also have passed into wardship, either to his guardian or to someone else for them to snatch a quick profit until the ward was old enough to reclaim his own."

[48] Ranald, 80. With reference to the threats used to force Bertram's consent, she quotes these lines from the King's speech:

> Do thine own fortunes that obedient right
> Which both thy duty owes and our power claims;
> Or I will throw thee from my care forever,
> Into the staggers and the careless lapse
> Of youth and ignorance, both my revenge and hate
> Loosing upon thee in the name of justice,
> Without all terms of pity. Speak! thine answer!
> (2.3.159-65)

[49] Painter, 389-90.

[50] While there is considerable debate for and against the idea that most of the viewers of Shakespeare's plays were from the privileged sectors of society, the proportionate space in the theatres where they were staged seems to offer the best clue to this question. Inasmuch as the gallery space, where the seating cost at least double the cost of yard standing space, was larger than the yard, we can assume that generally the majority of playgoers were from the privileged classes. Ann Jennalie Cook, one among other debaters, presents evidence in *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London: 1576-1642* to show that the spectators of Shakespeare's plays at this time were largely from the monied classes ((Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981) 9). There is no certain evidence, however, about how fanatical their views were. Some of the cases of marriage-related litigations cited by Amussen suggest that there were sometimes disputes among the population about whether or not a marriage was of equals. One such case is reminiscent to the situation of Bertram and Helena: "when William Baker sought to avoid his promised marriage to Agnes Whistlecroft on the grounds of disparity of fortune, some witnesses denied any inequality" (DEP/26, Agnes Whistlecroft con William Baker, ff. 437-42, 471-9, cited in Amussen 108). However, I have not come across enough records to know whether or not the lower classes viewed inter-class marriage with any greater favour than those of the privileged classes.

[51] Elliott, 88-89, 99.

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[52] Ann Leclercle, "Anatomy of a Fistula, Anomaly of a Drama," ed. Jean Fuzier and François Laroque, *All's Well That Ends Well: Nouvelles perspectives critiques* (Montpellier: Université Paul Valéry, 1986) 105-24.

[53] Albert Howard Carter, "In Defense of Bertram." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 7: 1 (1956) 29. Carter concludes that it is an invitation "to contemplate problems of value: service is not enough for love, he [Shakespeare] tells us in Helena's story, and honor, or service, he tells us in Bertram's is not enough without love, and in both their stories, neither love nor honor can flourish without truth" (31).

[54] William G. Meader, *Courtship in Shakespeare: Its Relation to the Tradition of Courtly Love* (New York: Octagon Books, 1971; First published 1952) 99-103.

[55] Meader, 103-7.

[56] Many writers on comedy have noted this common formula. See Northrop Frye, "The Mythos of Spring: Comedy," in *Comedy: Meaning and Form*, ed. Robert W. Corrigan (San Francisco: Chandler, 1965), 142-3; Albert Cook, *The Dark Voyage and the Golden Mean* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1966) 36; Nicholas Grene, *Shakespeare, Jonson, Molière: The Comic Contract* (London: Macmillan, 1980) 19.

[57] In 1597, as Marion Wynne-Davies has noted in "'The Swallowing Womb,'" an act was passed condemning to death and to loss of benefit of clergy any man who "took" a woman of substance against her will (*The Matter of Difference: Materialist Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, ed. Valerie Wayne (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), 130-1):

> Whereas of late time divers women, as well maidens as widows and wives, having substance, some in goods moveable, and some in lands and tenements, and some being heirs apparent to their ancestors, for the lucre of such substance been oftentimes taken by misdoers contrary to their will, and afterward married to such misdoers, or to others by their assent, or defiled, to the great displeasure of God, and contrary to Your Highness laws, and disparagement of the said women, and great heaviness and discomfort of their friends, and ill example of others; which offences, albeit the same made felony by a certain Act of Parliament made in the third year of King Henry the seventh, yet for as much as Clergy hath been heretofore allowed to such offenders, divers persons have attempted and committed the said offences, in hope of life by the Benefit of Clergy. Be it therefore enacted . . . that all and every such person and persons, as at any time after the end of the present session of Parliament . . . shall in every case lose his and their Benefit of Clergy, and shall suffer pains of death. (Elizabeth I, Cap. ix, *Statutes of the Realm*).

From this it seems reasonable to assume that marriages were quite commonly forced on women by men in Elizabethan times, in ways much less legal or pleasurable than Helena's forcing of Bertram.

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[58] Henri Suhamy, "De L'Amour Comme Moyen de Seduction ou Propositions pour une Lecture Anthropologique d'*All's Well That Ends Well*," ed. Jean Fuzier and François Laroque, *All's Well That Ends Well: Nouvelles perspectives critiques* (Montpellier: Université Paul Valéry, 1986) 43.

He also thinks Helena is a repetition of Shakespeare's other "héroines amoureuses et audacieuses," that is, a continuation of his theme of women wooing (41).

[59] Goldberg notes that male "evidence was deemed to carry more weight" than female (*Women, Work, and Life Cycle in a Medieval Economy: Women in York and Yorkshire c. 1300-1520* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) 222). Although his study relates to the fifteen century, attitudes a century later should not have varied much. As to class discrimination, he says that "There does appear to have existed some prejudice against poor witnesses;" he assumes that this was "because they might be considered most vulnerable to bribery" (219). He also cites records indicating that "Witnesses of servile status were not normally admitted under canon law," although he finds instances where exceptions were made to this rule (219).

[60] Arden edition, Footnote 3, 47.

[61] Chinua Achebe, "What Has Literature Got to Do with It?" *Hopes and Impediments*. (Heinemann International, 1988) 114.

[62] Achebe, 114-15.

[63] Achebe, 115.

Chapter 3

A Religious Dimension: Choice and Creed in *The Merchant of Venice*

In its play with the Jewish and Christian creeds, *The Merchant of Venice* argues for patriarchal intervention in the choice of a marriage partner, especially in the case of women, thus using religion[1] to back up a limited freedom of consent. At the same time, though to a lesser degree, it uses religion to speak in favour of a certain moderation of this limitation. Four factors -- money, language, law or custom,[2] and nature -- are zigged and zagged with Judaism and Christianity until all their favourable aspects fall to the latter, whose chief female partisan exemplifies an almost fanatic submission to her father's way of choosing her a husband. Changes to the sources of *The Merchant of Venice* suggest that the accents on religious difference and female consent were conscious.

While the play is set in Venice and the Italian Belmont, critics generally agree that the context is English.[3] For this reason and because the play was written for an English audience, the historical connections I shall consider here will mainly concern England. Since its expulsion in 1290 the Jewish community in England had remained small, although in his *History of the Jews in England,* Cecil Roth notes a relatively large influx into London of New Christians when Queen Elizabeth acceded to the throne.[4] As these forced converts had to express their old faith in secret, there are few records of their marriage practices. It is therefore difficult to know how much attitudes to patriarchal control over marriage choice differed between the Jewish and Christian communities in England at the time of Shakespeare. Certainly, the Jewish faith had a long history of such control. Except during their stay in Egypt (663-525 B.C.E.) when that society practiced a strict monogamy in which "the conjugal union was based on the mutual consent of the partners and imposed on the spouses identical obligations,"[5] the

Jews tended to emphasize the proverbs and laws of their Scriptures that gave the right of marital choice and consent, in the case of daughters, to fathers. Although a girl did have some say after the age of 12 1/2, the following mishnah (oral tradition) indicates that her voice was still restricted, both in adolescence and in adulthood: "The man may sell his daughter, but the woman may not sell her daughter; the man may betroth his daughter, but the woman may not betroth her daughter."[6] In other mishnah the limitations are expressed in greater detail:

> The father has the legal right to give his daughter in marriage by means of money, writ, and marital intercourse; to him belongs what she may find or earn; he also annuls her vows and receives her divorce; but he has no right to the fruit of her property during her life. When she marries, the husband's rights exceed those of the father in that he enjoys the fruit of her property during her life. Furthermore, he has the obligation of her support, ransom and burial.[7]

In some respects, particularly in the privileged sectors of society, English customs at the time *The Merchant of Venice* was written were the same in their effect on woman.[8] Aristocratic fathers usually disposed of their daughters but, unlike the Jewish custom, the contract was often made with the groom's father, who was then free to use his daughter-in-law's dowry or "portion" for his needs.[9] The bride's father supplied a jointure, the amount of which grew proportionately less compared to dowries as the sixteenth century advanced.[10] Normally the jointure, like the ketubbah of Jewish women, was not available to the wife except in case of divorce or the decease of her husband.[11] Despite the similarities in conditions of Jewish and some privileged Christian women, in some respects the Jewish law gave greater rights to women. First, her dowry or nedunya, though her husband could trade with it, belonged to her and had to be returned to her at divorce or at his decease. Second, for her marriage to be legal, there was a minimum ketubbah that had to be paid; this meant that her marriage was nearly always accompanied by some financial protection.[12] But no matter how beneficial these conditions were to the widow or divorced wife, they could not have given married Jewish women much more power than married English women.

However, not every Jew followed these traditions. Although the seclusion of Jewish women from society[13] was reinforced both by Martin Luther's advocacy of intolerance after he found they were not easily converted to Protestantism and by Pope Paul IV's (1555-1559) strong measures to exclude them from the social and economic activities of the Catholic world,[14] in the Elizabethan era there must have occasionally been wealthy Jewish women like those of the thirteenth century whose important position among the country's financiers gave them some freedom from patriarchal control.[15]

In Elizabethan England intermarriage between members of different religions was strictly controlled. Both Christian and Jewish fathers were particularly sensitive to this situation; there were interdictions on sexual relations between Jews and Christians in England from both sides. In its long history, the Jewish faith had repeated edicts prohibiting intermarriage with non-Jews.[16] Civil and Christian religious law in many European countries at different times also prohibited marriage with Jews.[17] Margaret Ranald points out that English law in Shakespeare's era prohibited marriages between "baptized and unbaptized persons" and between those of different religions.[18] The following incident is just one example of the violent reaction which marriage with Jews provoked among Christians:

> At the Council of the Province of Canterbury, held in Oxford in 1222, . . . a certain deacon who had been induced through the study of Hebrew to adopt Judaism and had married a Jewess . . . was degraded and handed over for punishment to Fawkes de Breauté, the sheriff of Oxfordshire. The latter, swearing 'by the throat of God' that he would be avenged on the blasphemer, and expressing his regret that he would go to Hell without his paramour, immediately had him burned.[19]

The Archbishop of Canterbury subsequently "published an injunction threatening with excommunication those who entered into familiar relations with Jews or even sold them provisions."[20] The Jewish reaction to such intermarriage did not entail such violence, as far as the records I have consulted indicate. According to Schereschewsky, in Jewish law "mixed marriages are not binding," the main legal consequences of this situation being that the woman "has no halakhic right to be maintained by her 'husband,'" and the man has no right to his wife's property.[21]

These sixteenth-century attitudes to marriage seem to be reflected in *The Merchant of Venice*'s management of money, language, law and nature, in a way that favours the Christians' behaviour in matters of consent. By its alignment with money in a superior social and moral sense, the Christian faith is generally represented in the play as outrivalling the Jewish faith; this represented superiority is linked with maintaining the tradition of fatherly or feudalistic intervention in the choice of a marriage partner, in the case of women. The money of Shylock "the Jew" brings him little social prestige, nor does it facilitate his moral action. Its effects on his New Christian daughter are ambiguous. But to the Christians in the play money gives both prestige and means of moral action. Indeed, socially speaking, money has influence in *The Merchant of Venice*; so the play's opening imagery suggests -- "the petty traffickers . . . cursy to . . . the pageants of the sea" (1.1.11-13).[22] Similarly, men from far and wide seek the wealthy Christian Portia as their bride. The first mention of her identifies her with her money -- she is "a lady richly left" (1.1.161). Bassanio never blushes that with the attainment of her love by a show of Antonio's wealth will come her wealth:

> O my Antonio, had I but the means
> To hold a rival place with one of them [her suitors],
> I have a mind presages me such thrift
> That I should questionless be fortunate.
> (1.1.173-6)

For others, her wealth inspires reverence. Salerio and Lorenzo stand in awe of Portia, and Nerissa and Gratiano respect her wishes. Lorenzo addresses her as "your honour"; he excuses his presence in her house by explaining that Salerio "entreated" him "(past all saying nay) / To come with him along" (3.2.225, 228-9).

Gratiano and Nerissa's marriage is dependent upon Portia -- other evidence that her economic position gives her social power and prestige. Following their mutual consent, Nerissa asks the consent of Portia: "Madam," she says, acknowledging her promise to Gratiano, "so you stand pleas'd withal" (3.2.209). There is a difference between marrying the spouse of one's parents' choice and seeking the consent of parents or master after choosing one's own mate, that is after oneself consenting to marry a certain person. Portia submits her own choice to a parent's will. While Nerissa has kept the choice for herself, she nevertheless makes it entirely conditional upon her mistress's situation. She consents to marry Gratiano on condition that Bassanio choose the casket that will enable him to marry Portia. In her subordination of her choice as well as her consent to her mistress's situation, her attitude goes beyond the deference commonly shown to employers in regard to marriage, at least according to records of practices in sixteenth-century London,[23] but its extremity does perhaps reflect practices imposed by lords on villeins in medieval times and existing attitudes among some unmarried aristocratic mistresses, such as Queen Elizabeth herself. A tenant, whether free or villein, was in feudal times expected to have his lord's consent to the marriage of any daughter, daughters and fathers being liable to reprisals in some cases if they did not seek such permission (as in one instance in Suffolk where the Lord broke into the girl's father's home and not finding her burnt it down).[24] Reports of Queen Elizabeth's refusal to allow her ladies-in-waiting to marry suggest that such feudalistic control was not unthinkable, even in the sixteenth century.[25] Nerissa's happy acquiescence to such a system gives it a favoured status in *The Merchant of Venice*. Her apparently contented deference also raises the status of her mistress so that her wealth is not seen as an obstacle between herself and others, but as a social magnet.

In the same way that Nerissa is not envious of her mistress's wealth that she understands is less conducive to happiness than "the mean" (1.2.8), Bassanio's materialistic inclinations in regard to Portia are underplayed. For example, his long speech to Portia at the time of his choosing the casket and his choice of the lead casket over those of silver and gold convey the idea that his love for her is completely free from economic motives. In this speech Bassanio talks about the deceptive nature of "ornament," showing that he possesses the same wisdom as Portia and the same detachment as Nerissa (3.2.73-107). Like Nerissa's knowledge of money's cares, his valuation of gold as a trap and a false outside contrasts with Shylock's all-consuming avarice. Consequently, just as Nerissa obtains the man she wants by her respect of Portia's position and by her submission to traditional controls in the matter of consent, so Bassanio gains gold and the wife he wants by his fitting in with the system; Shylock on the other hand loses his ducats and, in a sense, his wife, because the symbol of her love -- her ring -- is carelessly sold for a monkey.

Antonio displays a detachment from his wealth in some ways like Bassanio's and Nerissa's disinterested attitude towards Portia's money. He does not need to be reminded that money, represented as the world, should not engage a person's emotions and mind; to Gratiano's teasing advice, "You have too much respect upon the world; / They lose it that do buy it with much care," he answers, "I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano, / A stage, where every man must play a part, / And mine a sad one" (1.1.74-79). He does not hesitate to offer his "world" -- his "purse," his "person," his "extremest means" -- to help Bassanio make his suit to Portia, who like Antonio is "aweary of this great world" and is thus set above it -- as one for whom "the poor rude world / Hath not her fellow" (1.1.138; 1.2.1; 3.5.76-77). It is not clear from the play whether or not Antonio has patriarchal rights over Bassanio, as he might in the case of Bassanio's being orphaned, if he is his godfather as in *Il Pecorone*. If we assume that Antonio does, then his readiness to support his godson's own choice in marriage would present a contrast to Portia's position and to the impingement of creed on the question of marital consent in the play. Might it signify a deeper questioning of patriarchal intervention than does Portia's brief protest against her father's plan -- "O me the word 'choose'! I may neither choose who I would, nor refuse who I dislike, so is the will of a living daughter curb'd by the will of a dead father: is it not hard

Nerissa, that I cannot choose one, nor refuse none?" (1.2.22-25). Or does it argue for a different treatment of men and women in the matter? Is Shakespeare portraying a Christian tradition more Jewish than the Jew's tradition, by reflecting the biblical support of fatherly intervention in the case of daughters but not sons?

Certainly, Shakespeare's treatment of consent as it relates to Bassanio is ambiguous. In sixteenth-century England first sons, especially of those of the higher classes, were often subject to the same limitations as daughters; even at an advanced age their wives were sometimes chosen by their fathers, according to the wealth to be gained.[26] Such a procedure was considered to be in conformity with a religious outlook by some folk even in the mid-seventeenth century, as is indicated by the pious remark of one father that his son is "a free man, to be disposed of [in marriage] as God Almighty and his parents think fittest for him."[27] However, the younger son was only infrequently controlled in this manner, although in cases where there was money to be gained from the bride or had from his father or elder brother he was subject to some imposition from his seniors.[28] Bassanio appears to be either a younger son or an elder fatherless one who has lost his wealth. His freedom from any obligation to secure the consent of his family to marry Portia is therefore consistent with his counterpart in English society. However, he might have been portrayed as seeking some approval from Antonio because of his reliance on his wealth. That this is not done and that Antonio does not seem to desire any such control may suggest that the play favours a more liberal attitude in the case of male consent.

Its purpose may also be to draw a contrast between "the Jew's" attachment to his wealth and the Christians' willingness to share theirs. (They are even more willing to share Shylock's.) In any case, both Portia's and Antonio's detachment enables their money to produce, to be fruitful so to speak. But while Portia's wealth translates to "joys of heaven" for Bassanio and Antonio's to "ancient Roman honour" (3.5.70; 3.2.294), Shylock's becomes a sign of his lack of esteem and love for Jessica, a tool for his vengeance against Antonio, and the means by which he loses a daughter. When he professes a preference for ducats over his daughter, and cries for them both at once, he appears to identify his daughter with his money and shows he does not really care for her as a father should. His attempt to take revenge on Antonio exposes his selfishness and hate even more. Indeed, Shylock's plot to take a "breed" from his "barren metal" tangles him in a legal knot, barring him from any gain. It is carried out alongside another plot -- his daughter's -- which deprives him of both goods and progeny that he can recognize as his own, for he will not consider the children of a Christian Jessica to be his descendents (1.3.129), even though according to Jewish law they would be recognized as Jews whether their mother converted or not.[29] In the end he loses his faith and most of his money. Shylock's gold, then, has become "barren" in a number of senses. However, Antonio, although he is not physically Bassanio's father, obtains the function of fatherhood in relation to Bassanio by his almost motherly generosity and sacrifice for him. Thus, his wealth enables him to gain a child. In opposition to the apparently "sterile" Antonio,[30] Shylock loses rather than gains a child, despite his physical fathering of her. Underlying both results is the paradigm of fatherly intervention in consent for women but not for men: In the case of the Christians and where the money is gained, there is conformity to tradition in the case of daughters; for sons without wealth *The Merchant of Venice* is ambiguous, but if we assume that Bassanio is without money or guardian, as he seems to be, then the play also conforms to Elizabethan practice in the matter of sons. However on the Jewish side, "the Jew" loses both money and the ability to influence the choice of his daughter who has openly defied the tradition, both Jewish and English, of seeking paternal consent in marriage.

The humanist and religious morality characterizing the Christians' attitudes to money also privileges Portia's behaviour concerning marriage. Her submission to her father's stipulation that she only marry the man who chooses the chest of lead is, her maid Nerissa explains, a wise one. That the man she loves chooses this chest is a further proof of her wisdom in following her father. Her willingness to spend her money to save Antonio, her confidence in leaving her house in Lorenzo and Jessica's hands, shows a certain detachment from money, as does her love for a poor but "deserving" man (1.2.113). Her immediate placement of her wealth in his hands upon their agreement to marry, perhaps another sign of Shakespeare's creation of a Christianity that excels in Jewishness, again suggests an unmaterialistic orientation on her part. In contrast, Jessica uses her money to obtain a not so worthy man -- Lorenzo's insensitivity to her and his egoism contrasts with Bassanio's gentle respect and deference towards Portia. Lorenzo has the gall, for example, to tell his friends the private details of Jessica's letter to him -- that she has told him "What gold and jewels she is furnished with" -- as if his love for her is dependent on these things (2.4.31). Jessica herself is represented as unworthy of the wealth she takes from her father. Where Portia spends her money to save a man's life, she squanders her father's most prized ring on a monkey (3.1.108-109). Jessica's exposure of her money and jewels, both in the information she gives in her letter to Lorenzo and in her openly carrying them with her and rashly selling some in the market, if read in the light of the "Silenus box" image, creates an impression of unwisdom that contrasts with the impression of wisdom given by Portia's portrait being hidden in the lead casket and her discreet use of her wealth to save a life.[31] Barbara J. Baines discusses Bassanio's "definition"of the caskets "in precisely the terms of Erasmus' Silenus box" with which she argues Shakespeare was familiar. She identifies Portia as "a Silenus figure" because she "comes to pass sentence upon Antonio but instead saves his life." The background to this interpretation is Erasmus' explanation that "the Sileni were proverbial . . . as a metaphor for the disparity between appearance and reality" and his "catalogue of individuals . . . who, because their spiritual significance was not discernible in their humble appearance, were Sileni." Hence Jessica's display of her wealth might be read as signifying the opposite of Portia's hiding of her attributes.

The play distinguishes between the wealth of Christians and the wealth of the Jews in other ways. Love leads the wealthy Christians Antonio and Portia, whereas self-interest seems to be the most dominant concern of Shylock and, although Jessica is portrayed sympathetically, there are hints that she has more reasons for leaving her father's house than love for Lorenzo. From Shylock's remonstrances to her -- "Lock up my doors, and when you hear the drum / And the vile squealing of the wry-neck'd fife, / Clamber not you up to the casements then" (2.5.29-31) -- it appears she has been as oppressed as a Puritan's daughter. She herself calls her home "a hell" and, while her father refers to it as "sober," she complains of its "tediousness" (2.3.2-3; 2.5.36). One historian speaking of seventeenth-century Jewish community life in continental Europe remarks that "Without exception, Jewish women were subjected to a high degree of seclusion."[32] But however much the audience sympathized with anyone's escape from such a closed life, the spending (stealing) of wealth to escape would not in Elizabethan times have the dignity of spending money to save someone else from death.

Where Portia, to use Lars Engle's description of her social status, "establishe[s] her possession of it [her house], and of Bassanio, and her absolute mastery of the systems of exchange in the play which have routed all blessings, economic, erotic, and theological, toward Belmont,"[33] Jessica's money possesses none of these social powers. In contrast to Portia, she must tender her father's wealth to a single suitor in order to marry. Despite her wealthy background, she must deny her father his customary consent; she must deny her faith; she must deny two of her Prophet's most important commandments ("Honour thy father and thy mother;" "Thou shalt not steal.")[34] Besides, Salerio and Gratiano's conversation as they wait for her tardy groom suggests that she may have been obliged to break another of these commandments -- that concerning adultery;[35] they hint that Lorenzo has already "feasted" -- possibly on Jessica, hence he lacks "a keen appetite" to "sit down" again -- is slow in coming to meet her (2.6.8-9). While Portia is respected for her money, Jessica is laughed at, or so Gratiano's words, as she goes back for more ducats, suggest -- "Now (by my hood) a gentle, and no Jew." (2.6.51). Shylock's position is similarly undermined. Unlike Antonio who is looked up to by Salerio, Solanio, Gratiano, and Bassanio for his money, Shylock has been "rated" for his wealth (1.3.102). And though Shylock's money gives him status enough to be invited for supper, such an invitation without "love" is not enjoyed (2.5.11-13). As Paul Gaudet has pointed out, there is also evidence of a lack of love and respect for Jessica on Lorenzo's part, especially at her arrival with him at Belmont where she is not introduced or welcomed except obliquely and secondarily when Gratiano instructs Nerissa to "cheer yond stranger" (3.2.236).[36]

As with its two types of money, *The Merchant of Venice* presents two types of language -- heartfelt, love-inspired, honest language and calculated, pedantic, guileful language; in general it ascribes the first to the Christians and the second to "the Jew," again with the effect of promoting the tradition of patriarchal intervention in marital consent. There are also more subtle effects of the play's privileging of talkativeness over silence. In the opening scene, Solanio, Salerio and Gratiano, bubble with images and tales in their compassionate attempt to understand and cheer Antonio. Before "unburdening" himself at length to Antonio, Bassanio says of Gratiano, the most long-winded of the three, he "speaks an infinite deal of nothing (more than any man in all Venice)" (1.1.114-15).[37] However, he later chooses Gratiano as his companion in his suit to Portia. Though he warns Gratiano not to be too "bold of voice" (2.2.172), their loose tongues prove of value at the interview. Bassanio eloquently declares his love for Portia, and Gratiano is not too shy to ask for and procure Nerissa's hand. Portia, too, speaks "too long" in her emotional welcome of Bassanio (3.2.22-24). She later combines cleverness with compassion in her discourse in the guise of a lawyer. As with money, Bassanio shows some insight into language -- he sees beyond the immediate value of words. Portia is for him "fair, and (fairer than that word), / Of wondrous virtues;" "from her eyes" he has received "fair speechless messages" (1.1.162-4). None of the suitors who has already tried for Portia's hand could speak like Bassanio: the Neapolitan prince spoke only of his horse; the Englishman knew none of the languages spoken by Portia; as for the others, either their body language was too sad or too excitable, or it was implicitly inhuman -- the German at times "little better than a beast" (1.2.39-40, 67-69, 45-47, 58-59, 85). Although Bassanio speaks poetically of his love for Portia, his words stop and start in confusion because of his feelings: "Madam," he says to Portia accepting the ring she offers him, "you have bereft me of all words. / Only my blood speaks to you in my veins. . ." (3.2.175-6). For Bassanio, Antonio's letter is as his "body" and "every word in it a gaping wound / Issuing life-blood" and commanding his compassion (3.2.263-5). Launcelot, too, whose prejudiced attitude towards the Jewish faith is bluntly displayed when he calls Jessica a "pagan," nevertheless speaks a tearful, heartfelt farewell to the young daughter of his master, in which his tongue too is overcome by emotion (2.3.11-14).

In contrast, Shylock's words are clever, controlled, and usually unaffectionate. For example, when he calls Antonio "a good man" he is careful to specify the precise meaning of his terms: "My meaning in saying he is a good man, is to have you understand that he is sufficient" (1.3.11, 13-15). His "assurance" likewise must be a precise -- it must be signed and sealed. He subjects every sentence uttered to him to careful interpretation. When Bassanio requests him to dine with him and Antonio, Shylock puritanically thinks of the biblical references to pigs and to the separation of the chosen people from the others (1.3. 30). He uses a long drawn-out interpretation of an account in Genesis to defend his practice of usury (1.3.66-85), for which Antonio reviles him:

> Mark you this Bassanio,
> The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose, --
> An evil soul producing holy witness
> Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,
> A goodly apple rotten at the heart.
> O what a goodly outside falsehood hath!
> (1.3.92-97)

In light of Shylock's earlier aside in which he expresses the desire "to feed fat the ancient grudge" he has against Antonio, even his prayer "O father Abram, what these Christians are, / Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect / The thoughts of others" appears to intend the deception that Antonio here describes (1.3.42, 156-8). Shakespeare thus uses a double strategy to denigrate Shylock -- his own deceptive dialogue and Antonio's description of his deception.

Lorenzo and Bassanio present a parallel contrast. Unlike Bassanio's speech to Portia, Lorenzo's words undermine Jessica's station by hinting at, though humorously, the immorality of her marriage to him and the inferior nature of her loving relationship:

> In such a night
> Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew,
> And with an unthrift love did run from Venice
> As far as Belmont.
> . . . (5.1.14-17)

While these words are touchingly romantic in their evocation of stealth, mystery and purity -- purity in the sense that her love was "unthrift" or detached from material considerations, it is perhaps significant that they turn on Jessica rather than on Lorenzo, so that the illicit marriage appears to be of her doing. Lorenzo's next words are equally touching, but again suggestive of immoral action:

> In such a night
> Did pretty Jessica (like a little shrew)
> Slander her love, and he forgave it her.
> (5.1.20-22)

Although these words of romantic teasing seem intended to express love and acceptance, the "slander" from Jessica's mouth may suggest her contamination;

Lorenzo's forgiveness of this slander hints at his satisfaction with a partner of less value. He is superior because he overlooks her contamination. There may also be a hint here of the contract of love she has made with him, which from the Jewish standpoint is void; like the false words of slander, a marriage contracted with a non-Jew had no positive effect. That Lorenzo offers his forgiveness is another reminder that for Jessica no such feeling can legitimize her marriage to Lorenzo. Her words about him, although again expressions of love, may be seen to further this irony:

> In such a night
> Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well,
> Stealing her soul with many vows of faith,
> And ne'er a true one.
> (5.1.17-20)

Her soul has indeed been stolen -- through her conversion to Christianity. His vows of love and sexual faithfulness, it has already been hinted, may not be true (perhaps his "feasting" was not on her). Her inner self, then, has been doubly lost -- because of her conversion for the sake of sex and because of her love for someone insincere. In his argument that Lorenzo is unworthy, Gaudet suggests that his response to Jessica's praise of Portia -- "Even such a husband / Hast thou of me, as she is for wife" (3.5.77-78) "confirm[s] his narcissistic mode and Jessica's emotional isolation."[38] Despite its tone of tender affection, this conversation, like that of Act Five, has an undercurrent of double entendre.

Jessica's language is thus as ambivalent as the other aspects of her character.[39] This ambivalence is not surprising because she was what was called in the sixteenth century "a New Christian" and as such would have been subjected to mixed treatment in Elizabethan times. The New Christians and Marranos were generally suspected of still being Jewish, as indeed many of them were, having been forced to convert in order to keep their lives. They were thus subjected to the same prejudices and persecution as the Jews.[40] Jessica's ambiguous position as a New Christian is reflected in the changes in her language; sometimes she speaks freely, imaginatively, and sincerely from the heart, and other times her silence suggests she is uncomfortable, unwelcome, or perhaps "a surrogate for Shylock."[41] At the beginning of the play, she is separated from her father by her eluding his influence in her choice of a marriage partner and of a new creed; later her humorous, affectionate, and kindly expression of her intention to "set forth" Lorenzo (3.5.79-84), her colourful description of her own romance (5.1), and her sensitivity to music imply a continued difference from Shylock, although these responses also may be read as supporting her ambivalent position.[42] When she responds to the music with the serious words, "I am never merry when I hear sweet music," Lorenzo explains, "The reason is your spirits are attentive" (5.1.69-70). He goes on to characterize a person who does not show such attention as inhuman:

> The man that hath no music in himself,
> Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
> Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils,
> The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
> And his affections dark as Erebus:
> Let no such man be trusted . . .
> (5.1.83-89)

A little later he notices the voice of Portia. She calls her voice "a bad voice" (5.1.113), yet the audience has just heard it plead reasonably and eloquently for Shylock to be merciful. Inplying that wisdom comes from her mouth, she has when in the guise of Balthazar been said to be "a young body" with "an old head" (4.1.160-1), an image that also implies a harmony between her mind's beauty and her physical beauty and is evidence of perfection from a Renaissance standpoint. Though Shylock's reply to her was "by my soul I swear, / There is no power in the tongue of man / To alter me" (4.1.236-8), her words did secure Antonio's safety and convince Bassanio to part with his ring. Jessica's sensitive reaction to sweet music, like the court's and Bassanio's reaction to Portia's voice, suggest that Lorenzo's characterization refers to the insensitive one, Shylock. A language of the heart and affecting the heart thus distinguishes the Christians, even the New Christian, from "the Jew." This opposition reinforces the distinction drawn by the play between those who have been involved in contracting a marriage arranged under fatherly guidance and the father deprived of providing that guidance; it again buttresses conformity to the traditional paradigm of marital consent bounded by the patriarch. This distinction is reinforced by the ambivalent responses of the New Christian (Jessica) who continues in silence after her words about "sweet music;" as the only character on stage who does not speak, she becomes emblematic of "the Jew" who has just disappeared "not well" following his forced conversion (4.1.393). She also reminds the audience of Gratiano's earlier words that "silence is only commendable / In a neat's tongue dried, and a maid not vendible" (1.1.111-12). Indeed, she might have been seen by the audience as presenting a number of conditions that made a woman "not vendible" in Elizabethan times. Despite early seventeenth-century accounts of the "unimpeachable chastity" of their women,[43] Jews were, as persecuted groups so often are,[44] accused of prostitution.[45] They may also have been connected with syphilis, as nineteenth-century literature indicates they were at that time, although studies confirmed the relative infrequency of the disease among Jewish communities in comparison to Christian communities.[46] Associated with such conditions, Jessica would provide an added argument in favour of Portia's superiority. Even if the spectators did not partake of these prejudices, they might assume it was she whom Lorenzo had "fed upon." Unchastity along with being Jewish would then more solidly construct her position of not having her father's consent to marry Lorenzo as one inferior to Portia's.

However, Jessica's silence also complicates the treatment of consent in *The Merchant of Venice*. Like Antonio, who speaks less than his companions, Jessica also speaks less than other characters ("eight-two of the six hundred forty-two lines for which she is on stage").[47] Is Antonio's brevity of speech emblematic of his sterility or his chastity? What of Jessica's long silences? Silence was generally considered a virtue in woman -- one preacher in his 1591 *A Preparative to Marriage* states that "the ornament of a woman is silence, and therefore the law was given to the man rather than to the woman, to show that he should be the teacher and she the hearer."[48] That the brank -- a metal lock that bound a person's jaw shut -- was still being used in Elizabethan times particularly as a punishment for "scolds" suggests that the legal system itself not only condoned but enforced the silencing of women.[49] Elsewhere silence is identified with chastity. Its implications about Jessica's character and about the representation of consent in *The Merchant of Venice* are, however, ambiguous: If Jessica's silence implies her chastity, are Portia, Bassanio and the other loose-tongued Christians unchaste? Do they consent to unchaste behaviour prior to marriage, and is this behaviour therefore privileged by the play? Is such privileging meant to undermine the play's foregrounded advocacy of patriarchal control over consent to marriage? Is Portia's statement, "If I live to be as old as Sibylla, I will die as chaste as Diana unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will" (1.2.102-104), insincere in the light of Jessica's contrast to her, or does the silence after marriage in Jessica simply imply that she is disappointed in Lorenzo? Is Portia's later remark "And yet a maiden hath no tongue, but thought" followed by her own voicing of desire to detain Bassanio "some month or two" suggestive of a vocal behaviour unlike that generally recommended for women and perhaps reflective of a discrepancy between her consent to marriage and her consent to sex (3.2.8-9)? Is her complaint that the "will of a living daughter" is "curb'd by the will of a dead father" more a gesture of defiance than wistful reflection, as it is usually read (1.2.24-25)? Such questions are not easily answered, but that they underlie the dialogue may be sufficient to indicate that *The Merchant of Venice* is not straightforward in its treatment of a paternally limited consent. Nevertheless, it is hard not to agree with Carol Leventen's view that "The play . . . tends to endorse and reward Portia's behaviour as that of a dutiful daughter at the same time that it tends to judge the behaviour of Jessica, who defies paternal authority and appropriates her father's wealth, as that of an unruly daughter."[50]

It is perhaps paradoxical that the parties who conform to the tradition of patriarchal control over marital choice are in most other respects in the play represented as breakers of laws and traditions. Portia, for all her obedience to her father, bends his plot in the case of the German suitor by instructing Nerissa to put "a deep glass of Rhenish wine on the contrary casket," to which she is thus assured he will go because of his love of drinking -- this to prevent him from choosing correctly (1.2.91-92). Perhaps her invitation to Morocco to dine prior to his choosing has a similar motive. With Bassanio, she comes close to "teaching" him "How to choose right" (3.2.10-11). Antonio exemplifies a similar deflection from fanatic following of the English custom that provided for patriarchal intervention in the marital choice of sons as well as daughters. He immediately agrees with Bassanio's plan. He breaks other traditions too. Customarily, he "neither lends nor borrows," but to help Bassanio he decides to "break a custom" (1.3.56-59). Similarly, Gratiano and Bassanio at Antonio's bidding break tradition when they give away their rings (4.2).

Shylock, however, reflects the Puritan obsession with the letter of the law: "I have sworn an oath, that I will have my bond;" "by our holy Sabbath have I sworn / To have the due and forfeit of my bond;" "I stand here for law" (3.3.5; 4.1.36-37, 142). When Portia begs him to "render / The deeds of mercy," he answers, "My deeds upon my head! I crave the law, / The penalty and forfeit of my bond" (4.1.197-203) and goes on to insist upon the righteousness of this attitude:

> An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heaven, --
> Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?
> No not for Venice!
>
> (4.1.224-6)

Finally, the Christians delivering judgment on Shylock are represented as bending the law to his advantage, so that by his becoming a Christian his fine will be reduced by half. (Portia herself has already "invented" a law in order to save Antonio.[51]) Jessica's breaking of Jewish law is not in the least censured, although it cannot be said to be of the same minor nature as Portia's manipulation of her father's law; Portia not only carries out this manipulation discreetly, but does not substantially transgress her father's will as Jessica does her father's. Like Jessica's, Shylock's transgression of the law is represented as substantial and therefore not favoured. The effect is a privileging of moderate attitudes towards law and custom; Portia's subservience to her father's will is thus subsumed under the virtue of moderation. This humanist moderation on the part of the Christians, inasmuch as it includes a degree of deviation from the custom of strict patriarchal control on marital consent, can be said, like Portia's talkativeness, to raise questions about this custom, but in its overall framework the play still strongly supports this tradition in the case of women.

Nature is another motif of *The Merchant of Venice* that is used to favour the Christians and hence promotes their practices in the play concerning marital choice. As with money, language and law or custom, the good aspects of nature are Christian or, one could say, the Christians are the good aspects of nature.[52] Even the lottery set up by the Christian father to govern his daughter's choice of a marriage partner is presented as natural. Nerissa's assurance to Portia that her father's "meaning" will "never be chosen by any rightly, but one who you shall rightly love" comes true (1.2.30-32). All those who fail her father's lottery, also fail to evoke any desire in Portia, who thus gladly becomes firmer in her acceptance of her father's control: "I am glad this parcel of wooers are so reasonable," she says, "for there is not one among them but I dote on his very absence: and I pray God grant them a fair departure" (1.2.104-107). Shylock himself aligns what is natural in the Jew with the Christian. Christ made it unnatural to eat pork, he implies by his reference to the parable in which the devil causing insanity in a man was taken out by Jesus and put instead into some swine nearby (1.3.29-30).

However, the word play on "kind" and "kindness" that follows clearly distinguishes between the meaning of nature for Shylock and for the Christians, Bassanio and Antonio. The "kind" or "natural" thing Shylock offers, is the same "kind" he has received -- they "spet upon" his "Jewish gaberdine" and he will respond by spitting out some similar "courtesies" whose intention is the same "kind" of intention as that of the "spet" -- to degrade the recipient (1.3.138, 107, 123). When Bassanio misreads his intention, saying "This were kindness," Shylock responds by proposing a bond for "kind" rather than cash -- Antonio's flesh -- the most "natural" bond (1.3.141, 146). This action, Antonio similarly misreads and thus remarks, "there is much kindness in the Jew" (1.3.149). Finally, when Shylock insists on cashing his bond for "kind," he is referred to as unnatural -- "an inhuman wretch," "this cruel devil" (4.1.4, 213). Hence Christian nature -- "kindness" -- is seen as "kind" -- natural, while Jewish nature is portrayed as "unkind" -- unnatural. Other parts of the play suggest a similar opposition. For example, through Portia's "kindness" in helping Antonio and in Antonio's "kindness" in helping Bassanio (both in the moral sense), Portia gains a husband not attached to "kindness" (in its sense of "nature" or material): Bassanio purports to care for Portia's inner wealth -- her wisdom more than her outer wealth -- her money or her sex. Antonio earlier has received the comment, "A kinder gentleman treads not the earth," and has been referred to as "the kindest man, / The best-condition'd and unwearied spirit / In doing courtesies" (2.8.35; 3.2.291-2). As Bassanio and Portia's surrogate father, he gains "life and living" (5.1.286). In contrast, the result of Jessica's "kindness" -- an ambiguous value perhaps for her body, her money, or her love for Lorenzo -- is a husband who cares a great deal about "kind" in the material sense. Portia says "This deed will be well welcome to Lorenzo" (4.2.4). The consequence of Shylock's clearly unnatural "kindness" is a life only in the material sense, because he is forced out of his spiritual life when he recants his faith.

Even when nature is disguised, a contrast is drawn between Christians and Jews. When Portia disguises herself as a man, her motive is to save the life of a person, albeit someone dear to her husband. It is part of a task that entails a delay in the exercise of her sexual freedom (and therefore unnatural). The task, however, is a duty. This person has acted as a father towards her husband and has enabled her to be chosen by the man she loves; she therefore owes him gratitude. Jessica, though subtly, is still represented in a role less dramatic and with a purpose less profound. She disguises herself simply to obtain that "natural" sexual freedom which Portia denies herself for a time. But the consequence of Portia's action is to uphold nature, whereas the result of Jessica's is most unnatural. While Portia's masquerade enables her to save the life of a person -- her surrogate father-in-law's, Jessica's disguise, or at least its consequence, comes close to causing a man's death, that of her own father. Nature disguised in the Christian is still natural, while in the Jew it is unnatural.

Finally, the ambivalence with which Jessica takes up her role with Lorenzo suggests an unnaturalness in their marriage, whereas Portia and Bassanio's immediate harmony and constant interchange suggest a natural union and a healthy relationship. The audience would certainly have related this opposition to creed, but the question of marriage process, including patriarchal control, must also have entered their minds. On the other hand, there is no denying that Jessica and Lorenzo share sufficient loving conversation that has all the tone of sincerity to endear them to the reader and the spectator. But because the innocence of Jessica stands in contrast to a number of signs of unworthiness in Lorenzo, her situation might be exemplary for the spectators of young ladies who do not obtain their father's consent for marriage. I make this comment, though, with reservation, because her situation must also be weighed against the whole Shakespearean canon; as Niels Hansen remarks "Shakespeare's heroines are usually too good for the young men they are matched with."[53]

Money, language, law and nature, then, have all been placed on the side of the Christians and, in this sense, have advocated the subordination of female consent to patriarchal and (in the case of Nerissa) feudalistic control; in the case of Bassanio such consent has been portrayed free of all constraint. While some manipulation of paternal rule seems to be favoured as represented in Portia, the outright defiance of the paradigm is depicted as a behaviour only of Jews. Changes to the "probable" sources of *The Merchant of Venice,* Ser Giovanni Fiorentino's *Il Pecorone* (1558) and Masuccio's *Il Novellino* and to Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* (a sure source according to Geoffrey Bullough) suggest that this was intentional. First, Fiorentino's "lady" of Belmont is Christianized in a number of ways by Shakespeare. She is the object of Bassanio's "pilgrimage" (1.1.120). She pretends to go "to live in prayer and contemplation" at "a monast'ry" in *The Merchant of Venice* (3.4.28, 31), while in *Il Pecorone* she pretends to go to "a health resort."[54] In her disguise in *Il Pecorone* she is simply referred to as "the lawyer," whereas in *The Merchant of Venice* she takes the name Balthazar, a name often attributed to one of the three wise men.[55] This makes Portia's journey to Venice, her saving of Antonio and her condemnation of Shylock resonate with Christian symbolism (at least for an Elizabethan audience). Another Christian overtone in Portia, which pervades all the Christian characters in the play, is her detachment from material possessions. While *Il Pecorone's* lady seduces many a man to obtain his wealth, Portia is charitable with her possessions. As regards consent, if Shakespeare's play had clearly given Bassanio and Antonio the son-father relationship with which Giannetto and Ansaldo are linked in *Il Pecorone* , the question of parental consent or consent of guardian in Bassanio's marriage would have to be dealt with. Presenting Bassanio free from such a constraint may suggest a favouring in *The Merchant of Venice* of an unfettered male consent. On the other hand, if Bassanio is seen as a Christian being more Jewish than the Jews, he would necessarily be free in his consent as Jewish men were according to Jewish marriage laws.

Shakespeare's changes to the counterparts of Jessica may argue in another way against the transgression of the tradition of a father's choosing his daughter's partner. Carmosina, daughter of the stingy merchant in *Il Novellino,* is not labelled Jewish and eventually secures the consent of her father.[56] Abigail and her suitors in Marlowe's

The Jew of Malta similarly show deference to her father's will. Her father Barabas tells her beloved Mathias "Thou know'st, and heaven can witnesse it is true, / That I intend my daughter shall be thine."[57] Her rival lover Lodowicke also asks her father's consent.[58] The difference between *The Merchant of Venice* and another probable source from *Gesta Romanorum* again hints at a support of patriarchal limiting of female consent in Shakespeare's play. Portia's counterpart in the tale from this source chooses the right "chese" [chest] and thereby obtains the right to marry the Emperor's son.[59] Thus in this story a woman is the chooser, whereas in *The Merchant of Venice* Shakespeare gives this role to a man.

Some of the religious features of Shakespeare's play that are relevant to the question of consent are linked with other plays. *The Three Ladies of London* (1588), a play written not long before *The Merchant of Venice* and to which it has some connection, presents a character who was said to be "a Christian seeking to excel in Jewishness."[60] The Jew in the play is made out to be "more Christian in his views and behaviour than the Italian"[61] -- Christian. In a newly identified source of *The Merchant*, Moussé, Shylock's counterpart, is "a Jew more 'Christian' than the Christians." This French miracle play *Le miracle de un marchant et un juif* (1377) and *The Three Ladies of London* might have suggested the motif of religious displacement to Shakespeare.[62] The "Jewishness" of Bassanio insofar as he is free from any constraints on his marital consent was noted earlier. The "Jewishness" of Portia is evident in her deference to her father's will and her passing over of all her belongings to Bassanio. Taking this idea further, Portia may not simply be emblematic of English heiresses but, with her sharp-witted command of Venetian law and her vast wealth, she may be meant to suggest the Christian who is more Jewish than the Jew. Might she also be seen as inhabiting the life of a wealthy Jewess in Venice where, as Carol Leventen points out, "conditions determining the economic options of privileged women were much more propitious . . . than in Renaissance England?"[63]

The answers to such questions as this one will come as understanding of Elizabethan attitudes to Venice and to Jewish women and men grows, and will surely give us a better picture of the impingement of creed on marital consent than this present essay. The image drawn here is already complex, though the thrust is perhaps predictable given the society in which *The Merchant of Venice* was written. In its promotion of paternal control over female consent and the lack of patriarchal control in the case of male consent, the play presents Christian characters superior to Jews as regards their connections with money, language, law and nature. These Christian characters follow the Hebraic Scriptures and traditions concerning marital consent, Scriptures, which at the time of Shakespeare were being every day more heartily embraced by the Puritan population of England and which, at least in the case of patriarchal control over female consent, coincided with some current English traditions and upheld still popular feudalistic practices. On the other hand, the Jewish characters are represented as dilatory in their own faith. Jessica flouts, and Shylock is prevented from exercising his part in, this marriage law. Shakespeare conveniently depicts aspects of the English custom that harmonize with Jewish law, thereby accentuating the Christian-Jewish opposition -- making the Christians more Jewish than the Jews and giving added status to a patriarchally limited female consent. But from under the trains of tradition, which the play's brides Portia and Nerissa carry with such elegance, peep goblins -- words and actions that protest patriarchal control of female consent. And around Jessica --the bride transgressor of this tradition -- shine some lanterns of compassion and love.

Notes

[1] While I feel that the play spouts a great deal of anti-Semitism based on racialism, I agree with Michael Ferber and Marion Perret that much (Perret says "most") of the Elizabethan prejudice against Jews was religiously founded. This is one reason why a study focussed on the relation of religion to consent seems fitting. See Michael Ferber, "The Ideology of *The Merchant of Venice*," *English Literary Renaissance* (1990) 20: 3,

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441 and Marion D. Perret, "Shakespeare's Jew: Preconception and Performance," *Shakespeare Studies* (1988) 20, 261.

[2] I treat custom and law together here, because in the personal sense a custom can be seen as being as binding as a law and in a legal sense custom is "a usage or practice of the people, which, by common adoption and acquiescence, and by long and unvarying habit, has become compulsory, and has acquired the force of a law with respect to the place or subject-matter to which it relates" ("Custom and usage," *Black's Law Dictionary,* 1990 (6th) ed.).

[3] For example, Lars Engle remarks: "The play's Venetian setting and numerous fantastic elements do not prevent it from fitting Elizabethan patterns of aristocratic indebtedness and cash-raising through marriage" ("'Thrift is Blessing': Exchange and Explanation In *The Merchant of Venice,*" *Shakespeare Quarterly* (1986) 37: 1, 20-21).

[4] Cecil Roth, *A History of the Jews in England,* 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964) 139-40.

[5] Leonard Swidler, *Women in Judaism: The Status of Women in Formative Judaism* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1976) 6 citing Jacques Pirenne, "Le Statut de la Femme dans l'Ancienne Egypte," *La Femme: Recueil de la Société Jean Bodin,* XI: 1 (Brussels, 1959) 75.

[6] Sotah 3, 8 qtd in Swidler, 141.

[7] Ketubot IV.4 qtd. in Appendix A, Louis M. Epstein, *The Jewish Marriage Contract: A Study in the Status of the Woman in Jewish Law* (New York: Arno Press, 1973) 285.

[8] In 1571 a Canterbury canon decreed "that marriages were not to be contracted without parental consent" (Ralph A. Houlbrooke, *The English Family: 1450-1700* (London and New York: Longman, 1984) 69).

[9] Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1558-1641* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965) 632. Alan Macfarlane cites English laws that decreed that upon marriage the wife's possessions went to her husband, but mentions that it might also go to his kin. It would seem impossible to obtain a clear understanding of the general trend in Elizabethan times. Laws and decrees could represent an affirmation of an existing practice or an attempt to change a custom. Customs varied from class to class. (*Marriage and Love in England: Modes of Reproduction 1300-1840* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986) 272-4.) Susan Dwyer Amussen's history also indicates that there are still many unanswered questions about marital consent practices in Elizabethan times. While the cases she cites suggest that spouses was often chosen by daughters themselves, she does mention that it was customary for children to follow their parents' guidance. She also cites some cases in which women's choices of husbands were constrained by parents and brothers, and where fathers and uncles chose her a spouse. However, it must be noted that her study concerns village life, which in many respects was quite different from that of Londoners and of aristocrats. (*An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988) 106-107, 2.)

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[10] Stone, *The Crisis*, 643-5. Macfarlane, 281.

[11] Stone, *The Crisis*, 633. Macfarlane, 281.

[12] Ben-Zion Schereschewsky, "Ketubbah," *The Principles of Jewish Law,* ed. Menachem Elon (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1975) 387-90.

[13] Outside the home women were generally escorted and were prevented from attending places of public entertainment (Jonathan I. Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism: 1550-1750* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985) 200-1).

[14] Cecil Roth, *A History of the Jews: From Earliest Times Through the Six Day War,* rev. ed. (New York: Schocken Books, 1970) 245-7. Roth specifies that not only widows, but Jewish spinsters and wives were involved in independent businesses.

[15] Cecil Roth, *A History of the Jews in England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964) 115.

[16] Schereschewsky, "Mixed Marriage," 376-7; Niels C. Nielsen, jr. et al., eds. *Religions of the World,* 2nd. ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988) 385, 397, 399.

[17] The Pope ratified the prohibition of intermarriage with the Khazars or "Mountain Jews" made Catholic clergy in Hungary in 1309. (D. M. Dunlop, "The Khazars," *The World History of the Jewish People: The Dark Ages,* ed. Cecil Roth, rev. ed. I. H. Levine (Ramat-Gan, Israel: Rutgers University Press, 1966) 356, citing S. Szyszman "Les Khazars. Problèmes et controverses," *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions,* 152 (1957) 212 note 3). Even in Holland where Jews enjoyed perhaps the greatest freedom, in the early seventeenth-century Grotius (despite his advocacy of other liberal politics) "wanted sexual contact between Christians and Jews forbidden" (Israel, 64). According to the same author ". . . it was universally true, even in Amsterdam, that public and civic law forbade sexual relations between Jews and Christians" (201).

[18] Margaret Loftus Ranald, *Shakespeare and His Social Context* (New York: AMS Press, 1987) 6.

[19] Roth, *The History of the Jews in England,* 41.

[20] Roth, *The History of the Jews in England,* 42.

[21] Schereschewsky, "Mixed Marriage," 377.

[22] William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice,* ed. John Russell Brown (Arden) (London and New York: Routledge, 1989; first published in 1964). All following quotations are taken from this edition.

[23] Records of maids in London show that they often terminated their employment shortly before marriage, suggesting "that servants had to elicit their masters' and mistresses' consent before they were free to marry." Vivien Elliott notes that "Leaving service was an effective means of dispensing with such approval. . ." (Vivien Brodsky

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Elliott, "Single Women in the London Marriage Market: Age, Status and Mobility, 1598-1619," *Marriage and Society: Studies in the Social History of Marriage*, ed. R. B. Outhwaite (London: Europa Publications, 1981) 96). Macfarlane notes that "for centuries" following feudal times servants in England needed the permission of their employers in order to marry (256).

[24] Paul R. Hyams, *King, Lords and Peasants in Medieval England: The Common Law of Villeinage in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980) 189, 139-40, citing *Curia Regis Rolls* ix.336, x.150 (Suffolk 1220).

[25] Stone, *The Crisis*, 605-606. Critics quite frequently draw liaisons between Elizabethan playwrights' construction of female protagonists and Queen Elizabeth's position and views. Jankowski lists more than half a dozen critics who find such influence in Lyly's Sapho, for example (Theodora A. Jankowski, *Women in Power in the Early Modern Drama* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992) note 7, 141).

[26] Stone, *The Crisis*, 599. Macfarlane quotes several English laws that stipulate children's rights to freely dispose of their own property. He notes the contrast between the English law and those of the continental Europeans which frequently gave their children's property rights to the father. Macfarlane's laws contradict some of the personal documentation of the period, making it difficult for a general conclusion to be drawn. Only further investigation will give a clearer understanding of the historical context of this play (80-81). While some of the cases cited by Amussen support the idea that deference was shown to fathers by some sons as regards their choice of spouse, in many instances the son seems to have done the choosing himself. However, her study is of villages and therefore does not reflect the practices of all sectors of society (71-72, 2).

[27] Sir Owen Wynn (1653) qtd. in Stone, *The Crisis*, 599.

[28] Stone, *The Crisis*, 600. Macfarlane remarks, "Particularly for younger sons, it was advised that they should use their good breeding and titled background to marry a wealthy tradesman's daughter" (256).

[29] Schereschewsky, "Apostate," 378.

[30] Paul Gaudet suggests that Antonio's words "I am a tainted wether of the flock, / Meetest for death" (4.1.114-15) "associate" him "with sterility" ("Lorenzo's "Infidel": The Staging of Difference in *The Merchant of Venice*," *The Merchant of Venice: Critical Essays*, ed. Thomas Wheeler (New York and London: Garland, 1991) 352).

[31] "Shakespeare and the Erasmian Box," *Renaissance Papers* (1981) 34, 40-41.

[32] Israel, 200.

[33] Engle, 37.

[34] The Bible, Kings James Version, Exodus 20: 12, 15.

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[35] No distinction was made between fornication and adultery in the early interpretations of the biblical commandment "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20: 14).

[36] Gaudet, 359.

[37] Oddly in every scene that they are together, Bassanio's loquacity equals or supersedes Gratiano's.

[38] Gaudet, 365-6. Robert McMahon gives a similar interpretation in "'Some there be that shadows kiss': A Note on *The Merchant of Venice,* II.ix.65": the narcissicism characterizing Aragon, he argues, explains his failure to choose the correct casket -- "the moral sterility of Aragon's self-love" entails "the sterility of his direct lineage" (*Shakespeare Quarterly* (1986) 37: 3, 373).

[39] Norman Rabkin remarks that "the characterizations of Lorenzo and Jessica have been disputed often enough to suggest that their ambivalence is built into the play" ("Meaning and Shakespeare," *The Merchant of Venice: Critical Essays,* ed. Thomas Wheeler (New York and London: Garland, 1991) 113). The questions at the beginning of Gaudet's essay expose a number of the text's ambiguities related to Jessica.

[40] Roth, *A History of the Jews in England,* 136-8.

[41] Gaudet, 367. Gaudet earlier notes that in his Stratford, Ontario production Mark Lamos "used Jessica as sympathetic reflector on Shylock, internalizing her dilemma and substantially muting the usual father-daughter counterpoint" (361).

[42] For example, Gaudet finds Lorenzo's response to Jessica's "melancholy" reaction to the music "out of touch and only superficially soothing" (367). (See also pp. 365-6.)

[43] Israel, 200.

[44] Minucius Felix, "Octavius 9.1-6" qtd. in Molly Whittaker, *Cambridge Commentaries on Writings of the Jewish and Christian World, 200 B.C. to A.D. 200: Jews and Christians: Graeco-Roman Views* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) 174. In this Latin dialogue of accusations against Christians and their refutations recorded in the third century A.D., Christians were said to "recognize one another by secret marks and signs and love one another almost before making acquaintance. Moreover this is combined with a kind of religious sexuality and they call themselves promiscuously *brothers and sisters,* so that not uncommonly by warranty of the sacred name there is incestuous lewdness." The charges of prostitution, immorality and adultery which have, over the last 140 years, repeatedly been laid against the Bahá'ís in Iran smack of the same prejudice (*The Bahá'ís in Iran: A Report on the Persecution of a Religious Minority* (New York: Bahá'í International Community, United Nations Office, June 1981) 16, 18.

[45] Sander L. Gilman, "'I'm Down on Whores,'" *Anatomy of Racism*, ed. David Theo Goldberg (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 160.

[46] Gilman, "'I'm Down on Whores,'" 165-6.

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[47] Gaudet, 353.

[48] Henry Smith qtd. in Pearl Hogrefe, *Tudor Women: Commoners and Queens* (Ames: The Iowa State University Press, 1975) 7. John Dod and Robert Cleaver likewise saw silence as a virtue of a good wife (*A Godly Form of Household Government: For the Ordering of Private Families According to the Direction of God's Word* (1614) STC 5382, sigs. L 4-5).

[49] It was used in England and in Scotland in Elizabethan times according to William Andrews, *Old Time Punishments* (Detroit: Singing Tree Press, 1970; first published in 1890)12, 38-39.

[50] Carol Leventen, "Patrimony and Patriarchy in *The Merchant of Venice*," in *The Matter of Difference: Feminist Materialist Criticism of Shakespeare* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991) 59.

[51] Amiel Schotz, "The Law That Never Was: A Note on *The Merchant of Venice*," *Theatre Research International* (1991) 16: 3, 249-52.

[52] David Bady in "The Sum of Something: Arithmetic in *The Merchant of Venice*" points out that the Elizabethans believed that excess or inequality was unnatural, and thus he relates the play's money motifs to those concerning nature. (*Shakepeare Quarterly* (1985) 36:1, 26-27).

[53] Niels Bugge Hansen, "The Merchant, the Jew, and the Humanist," *A Literary Miscellany Presented to Eric Jacobsen*, ed. Graham D. Caie and Holger Norgaard (University of Copenhagen, 1988) 263.

[54] Ser Giovanni Fiorentino, *Il Pecorone* (1558), *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey Bullough (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957) 475.

[55] "Balthasar," *The Reader's Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary*, 1971 ed.

[56] *Il Novellino of Masuccio* (trans. by W. G. Walters, 1895), *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, ed. Geoffrey Bullough (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957) 504.

[57] Christopher Marlowe, From *The Jew of Malta*, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, ed. Geoffrey Bullough (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957) 496.

[58] Marlowe, From *The Jew of Malta*, 497.

[59] *Story LXVI: Ancelmus The Emperour* From *Gesta Romanorum* (The Old English Versions of the Gesta Romanorum, ed. Sir. F. Madden, London, 1838), *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, ed. Geoffrey Bullough (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957) 514.

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[60] A. J. Hoenselaars, *Images of Englishmen and Foreigners in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries: A Study of Stage Characters and National Identity in English Renaissance Drama, 1558-1642* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1992) 55.

[61] Hoenselaars, note 80, 279.

[62] J. Madison Davis and Sylvie L. F. Richards, "The Merchant and the Jew: A Fourteenth-Century French Analogue to *The Merchant of Venice,*" *Shakespeare Quarterly* (1985) 36:1, 56-63.

[63] Leventen, 62. Contrary to this remark, some histories indicate that many women, including the most intellectually talented (like Marietta Tintoretto) were forcibly housebound. Except for courtesans, working women earned little and had little chance of participation in public activities. Possibly Leventen is referring to courtesans, some of whom it appears did occupy respected and powerful positions. See D. S. Chambers's *The Imperial Age of Venice: 1380-1580* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1970) 136-9.

Chapter 4

A Racial Dimension: Consent and Colour in *Othello*

The specter of "death and damnation" that Othello inhabits when he believes that Desdemona is unfaithful and his final heroic visage of "one that lov'd not wisely, but too well" both emerge from his ignorance of the sticky web that Iago has concocted out of the Elizabethan ideas about marital consent and racial colour.[1] To understand the relationship between race and consent in this play, I will look at some of the closely aligned images, especially those of robbery[2] and witchcraft.[3] By studying these metaphors as they relate to Iago's scheme and to the audience's view, and by comparing them to their counterparts in Cinthio's *Gli Hecatommithi*, the principal source of *Othello*, I hope to determine the general thrust of the idea of consent in this play as it is influenced by the represented concept of race. In my discussion I identify race with colour, because Othello's colour is the attribute by which his race is most clearly defined and distinguished from other races represented in the play.[4]

Shakespeare's neat linking of robbery with female consent in *Othello* seems particularly appropriate in light of some sixteenth-century attitudes. Alan Macfarlane notes, for example, that

> In England, adultery was seen as a form of theft, particularly a theft of the exclusive and monopoly rights in a partner's sexual and companionly services. *The New Whole Duty of Man* stated that "the corrupting of a man's wife, enticing her to a strange bed is by all acknowledged to be the worst sort of theft, infinitely beyond that of goods."[5]

Macfarlane's quotation from *The New Whole Duty of Man* indicates that woman was considered a property, though of a value superior to that of ordinary goods. The Elizabethan customs and laws governing marital consent are likewise evidence of the connection between consent and the exchange of property, such that the marriage of a couple without parental approval was sometimes seen as theft from the parents. Clandestine marriage -- that is, marriage without prior parental and community consent and without the publication of banns that would permit anyone to declare impediments to the marriage -- was therefore treated in some cases as a crime. In certain cases, where impediments to the marriage existed, these clandestine marriages were not considered valid;[6] sex between parties to such a marriage was adultery. Marriage between people of different skin colour was not, as far as I can determine, considered to be a diriment impediment (an impediment nullifying the marriage from the beginning).[7] That Othello and Desdemona's marriage was carried out both clandestinely and without parental approval, however, would have been sufficient for the same spectators to view it as theft. In his writings, Shakespeare uses the image of robbery to represent illicit sex. Linda Woodbridge points out, for example, that "*Lucrece* riots in images of sex as burglary. In the rape scene, the analogy is explicit, as Tarquin burgles his way to Lucrece's bedchamber, forcing the locks of doors. . . ."[8] In *All's Well That Ends Well,* Helena foreshadows her bed-trick, saying that she is "like a timorous thief, most fain would steal / What law does vouch mine own" (2.5.81-82).[9] When she embarks ostensibly on pilgrimage but really to be bedded with Bertram she soliloquizes, "Come, night; end, day; / For with the dark, poor thief, I'll steal away" (3.2.128-9).

The criminality attributed to "stolen" sex is evident in the English laws that controlled secret marriage. Even in cases of valid clandestine marriages the priests who performed these marriages were punished, and during Catholic rule the couple was liable to excommunication for "procuring a secret solemnization."[10] What is more pertinent to the present discussion, however, are the litigations that were sometimes initiated by families whose children contracted marriages without their consent.[11] The audience's familiarity with such procedures might make them suspect Iago of some scheme when he tries to implicate Othello in the robbery of Desdemona from her father Brabantio. This is in fact Iago's first accusation:

> Awake! what ho, Brabantio! thieves, thieves, thieves!
> Look to your house, your daughter, and your bags.
> Thieves, thieves!
> (1.1.79-81)

When Brabantio comes to the window, Iago repeats the accusation after first arousing suspicion in Brabantio with the words, "Are all doors lock'd?" (1.1.84). He then identifies the "robbery" with Othello's and Desdemona's marriage and suggests that the resulting progeny to whom Brabantio will be "grandsire" will be of animal and mixed nature (1.1.86-91).[12] The long time Brabantio takes in understanding the kind of robbery announced to him allows for the connection between this "theft" and Desdemona's marriage to be repeated and detailed. Iago's racial slurs, therefore, continue, as he explains to Brabantio that his grandsons and other blood relations will "neigh" to him. Brabantio still does not perceive the implications of his loss -- that this "theft" will affect his descendents, his "human" nature and his language. Roderigo is therefore given the opportunity to round out the meaning in a long speech, in which he reminds him three times that Desdemona has married without his consent:

> If't be your pleasure, and most wise consent,
> (As I partly find it is) that your fair daughter,
> At this odd-even and dull watch o' the night,
> Transported . . .
>
> If this be known to you, and your allowance
> . . .
>
> Your daughter (if you have not given her leave,
> I say again), hath made a gross revolt,
> Tying her duty, beauty, wit, and fortunes,
> In an extravagant and wheeling stranger. . .
> (1.1.121-36)

Finally aware of his daughter's marriage, Brabantio calls her transgression of the custom of obtaining parental consent "treason of the blood" (1.1.169), and upon meeting Othello cries, "Down with him, thief!" (1.2.57).

We might expect that robbery, in the sense of rape, having sex or getting married without a father's permission, would be attributed to Othello by his antagonists. Though the setting is Venice, the context of the play is English. Anti-"alien" feelings were growing in England as the number of "others" increased. Martin Orkin and Eldred Jones both draw attention to Queen Elizabeth's complaint in 1601 over the number of "Negars and blackamoors" in England.[13] We know there were riots against "foreigners" in London during the latter part of the sixteenth century, but it is not clear whether any of these were against Africans.[14] In 1580 there was legislation relating to the "children of aliens and strangers" in which it was decided that "Children of Aliens, not being Denizens, and born in England, shall not be reputed English."[15] In this milieu, then, the marriage of an English woman (as Desdemona would be in Elizabethan eyes) to an alien (as Othello would seem to his audience) could be equated with the father's loss of his generative powers, because all his progeny would effectively be non-English.

The literature reinforced this image by its association of adultery with blacks.[16] Michael Neill observes that the most widely circulated book, the Bible itself, implies a link between illegitimate sex and blackness: "Can the blacke More change his skin? or the leopard his spottes . . . I have sene thine adulteries, & thy neyings, y filthines of thy whoredome."[17] Leo Africanus, the most importance source of information about blacks during Elizabethan times,[18] wrote,

> Yet is there no nation vnder heauen more prone to venerie . . . They have great swarmes of harlots among them; whereupon a man may easily coniecture their manner of living.[19]

Other histories of the period ascribed deception and crime to military victories accomplished by blacks. Of one triumphant African leader, John Polemon wrote:

> . . . he was accompted of many for a Negro or black *Moore*. He was of a peruerse nature, he would neuer speak the truth, he did all things subtelly and deceitfully. He was not delighted in armes, but as he shewed in all battailes, of a nature cowardly and effeminate. But he so

> cruelly hated Christians, that he would kil either with famine or nakednesse, those that he caught.[20]

While the conqueror of the (Spanish) territory of Alcazar described in this history sounds in Shakespearean terms more like Iago than Othello, it is noteworthy that the success of this black leader is shown to be illegitimate and unnatural. Othello's success in wooing Desdemona likewise can only be illegal; his attraction of her can only be theft -- thus Brabantio says, he must be "out of warrant" (1.2.79).

Iago accuses Othello of theft, but the audience sees that the real thief in the play is the accuser. Does this paradox have any impact on the representation of marital consent in *Othello*? The first words of the play uttered by Roderigo, "I take it much unkindly / That thou, Iago, who hast had my purse, / As if the strings were thine, shouldst know of this," foreshadow Iago's usurpation of control over property and knowledge (1.1.1-3). As he advises Roderigo eleven times to "make money" and "put money in his purse," finally mocking him at his departure, "Thus do I ever make my fool my purse," the reader or audience becomes more aware of Iago's greed and his plans to steal (1.3.340-81). When he convinces Roderigo of the need to kill Cassio, "without which there were no expectation of our prosperity," Roderigo understands their "prosperity" to be Iago's revenge of Othello for appointing Michael Cassio his officer instead of him and his own obtaining of Desdemona's body (2.1.274-6). However, because of Iago's earlier monologue revelations, the audience may translate these words to a monetary "prosperity" exclusively for Iago. Though his declared suspicion of Othello's abduction of his wife Emilia somewhat obscures Iago's intention of robbing Roderigo (2.1.290-4), as the play progresses we hear that Roderigo's "money is almost spent" (2.3.355-6), and finally that he has given jewels to Iago to be delivered to Desdemona (4.2.187-8), jewels enough that Iago determines to have Roderigo killed in order not to let him find out they have been pocketed by himself (5.1.11-22). With this revelation of Iago's character, those of the audience familiar with John Poleman's history might modify their views about blacks, for as the play advances Iago falls more and more into the characterization he gives to negroes while Othello evinces the idealism and nobility of a Spanish hero.

The audience also witnesses Iago's involvement in others' being robbed. He does everything he can to get Cassio drunk until he has robbed him of his mind; aware of losing control, Cassio says -- "O God, that men should put an enemy in their mouths, to steal away their brains" (2.3.26-40, 282-3). After he is robbed of his brain, his reputation is stolen -- again by Iago who has orchestrated events so that Cassio will fight Roderigo (2.3.254-7). Of the handkerchief Othello gave to Desdemona, Emilia declares in a monologue, "My wayward husband hath a hundred times / Woo'd me to steal it" (3.3.296-7). Finally, Iago is instrumental in Othello's losses -- of his friendship for Cassio, of his fortune and life, and of his most precious Desdemona. All these thefts on the part of this cruellest of Shakespeare's villains considerably undermine any consideration the audience would give to the accusation that Othello's secret marriage to Desdemona was a robbery perpetrated against Brabantio. As Brian Vickers points out, dichotomies -- referring to the "black/white, Christian/ pagan, angel/ devil, native/ stranger . . . binary pairs" and the oppositions between "legal and illegal, . . . natural and unnatural" in *Othello,* and I add, such as those used by Iago in accusations against Othello, must be read within the context of the play's characters.[21] Hence while Iago ascribes the attributions of devil, stranger, illegal, unnatural to Othello, Othello's actions show him to be the opposite.

Following Iago's complaint, Brabantio suggests a greater reprehensibility in Othello; he accuses Othello of having abducted and married Desdemona without *her* consent. This action alludes to the widespread belief that the consent of the man and woman was the most fundamental principle of any marriage, even in cases of seduction resulting in pregnancy.[22] In this second accusation Brabantio relates Othello's theft to his magical powers:

> O thou foul thief, where hast thou stow'd my daughter?
> Damn'd as thou art, thou hast enchanted her,
> . . .
> Judge me the world, if 'tis not gross in sense,
> That thou has practis'd on her with foul charms,
> Abus'd her delicate youth, with drugs or minerals . . .
> (1.2.62-74)

Brabantio continues to mix the ideas of robbery and magic as he reports his "particular grief" to the Duke and his officers:

> She is abus'd, stol'n from me and corrupted,
> By spells and medicines, bought of mountebanks,
> For nature so preposterously to err,
> (Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,)
> Sans witchcraft could not.
> (1.3.60-64)

Seeming to accept that the theft must have been carried out with magic, the Duke pledges punishment for the criminal who "Hath thus beguil'd your daughter of herself, / And you of her" (1.3.66-67). The "beguiling" of Desdemona of "herself" implies that her action has been obtained without her consent or that her free will has been made subject to another's will.

The first charms of which Brabantio accuses Othello are dependent on material products and hence suggest a kind of natural magic, which in Elizabethan times was considered less malignant than a magic influenced by spirits.[23] However, the duke's brief reference to "beguiling" implies a magic not dependent on any material substance. Later Brabantio emphasizes the unnaturalness of Othello's magic and its connection to hell, again hinting at some non-material influence:

> . . . she, in spite of nature,
> Of years, of country, credit, everything,
> To fall in love with what she fear'd to look on?
> It is a judgment maim'd, and most imperfect,
> That will confess perfection so would err
> Against all rules of nature, and must be driven
> To find out practices of cunning hell,
> Why this should be; I therefore vouch again,
> That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood,
> Or with some dram conjur'd to this effect,
> He wrought upon her.
> (1.3.96-106)

This connection between love and magic is perhaps one of the oldest and most widespread of myths. Medieval stories literally swim in love potions. The theatre of Shakespeare's England likewise portrayed magic as a means to sex or love. In Munday's *John of Bordeaux,* for example, the evil magician Vandermast uses magic to abduct the wife of the play's central character.[24] Other plays including Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* use benevolent magic to assist legitimate lovers.

It is not surprising that magical powers are so easily attributed to a black man. Magic was frequently linked to the marginal, the ugly, and the evil, of society, all of which sectors were occupied in the minds of the English by the colour black and black people. Even the Black Madonnas of medieval times were, according to Roger Bastide, "not so much the Loving Mother as a sorceress, a rain maker, a worker of miracles," having "the magnetism of the strange, smacking of Gypsies and Moors."[25] The association of blacks with slavery, with animals, and with distant places meant that for Elizabethans they were on the edge, of the traditional class hierarchy, of the human domain, and of the known world. Black people, possibly "over a million . . . every century of the late Middle Ages," were traded as slaves by white Muslims, and the Portuguese procured their own in Africa from the fifteenth century.[26] In 1554 the white Englishman John Locke abducted four or five black men during a commercial voyage to the west coast of Africa, and brought them back to England where they were kept as slaves and where they were taught English with the prospect that they might be used as translators during future trips.[27] As the English pursued trade with Morocco and with other regions on the coast of Africa from at least as early as the 1550's, there may have been other people from the region in England. Given the status of a slave, a position that Europeans had long believed through their indoctrination with Aristotle to be natural,[28] black people came to be identified with the most subordinate (and most undesirable) position in society.[29] Pushing them to even further reaches of liminality, both Leo Africanus (English translation 1600) and Richard Hakluyt (1554) wrote of the "beastly" life led by negroes.[30] The words of Sir John Hayward (1564-1627) concerning Queen Elizabeth indicate the English people's identification of blacks with ugliness: "Now her virtues were such as might suffice to make an Æthiopian beautiful."[31] In *The Merchant of Venice* Portia ostensibly searches for morality in her spouse; Bassanio is described as the "best deserving" in contrast to the other Europeans whose behaviour ranges from "everywhere" to "little better than a beast" (1.2.113, 85, 73).[32] But her interest in good character does not extend to even the most virtuous of Africans; she will not marry the Prince of Morocco "If he have the condition of a saint" (1.2.123). With his "complexion of a devil," he is out of the range of what, for Portia, is natural and good-looking (1.2.124). The association of black people with countries in which the sun was so hot that people hated to see it rise[33] made them the most foreign of the foreign to the sun-worshipping inhabitants of foggy England.[34] The "heroic world" Othello comes from is, as Paul Cantor reminds us, one of "epic romance" or at least so associated by the English.[35] His consequent association with fiction or at least with wonderful adventures is another of his attributes that makes him closer to the world of magic.

But the most far-reaching of images which connect skin colour with magic is that of the blackness of sin, the devil and supernatural evil. Bad people and devils were coloured black in English sculptures,[36] pictures and emblems,[37] and in literature too[38] black was a constant symbol of evil. In Jonson's *Masque of Blackness,* for example, which was performed at Whitehall in 1605 just a year after the date attributed to the writing and first performance of *Othello,*[39] the blackness of Niger's daughters is washed off as the essential action of their becoming beautiful and good.[40] Jonson's *Masque of Beauty* similarly emphasizes the black / ugly and bad, white / beautiful and good fictions. The arts had long promoted the link between black and evil magic.[41] Besides *Othello,* other plays of the period endowed black people with evil magical inclinations or unnatural characteristics. In Barnabe Barnes's anti-Catholic play *The*

Devil's Charter: A Tragedie Containing the Life and Death of Pope Alexander the Sixt, the Pope speaks of his holding councils and "misty machinations" with "black *Tartarian* fiends."[42] Middleton's *The Triumph of Truth* presents a Christian Moorish couple taunted by the "charms" of Error.[43] Such representation stands in contrast to the frequent beauty of blacks in Egyptian and Greek sculpture and painting.[44]

The association of black people with magic was partly a result of the aura of liminality placed upon all but the most ordinary citizens in the early English Renaissance, as in the Middle Ages. People who were on the outskirts of the known and the desired, and those considered unfamiliar, ugly, and sinful were connected to whatever else occupied that domain -- in particular, the supernatural and magical. Like the knowledgeable women of the period, the healers, dwarfs, and bandits, blacks fell into this category. The most famous magician of the time, Agrippa, had a black dog that was said to be a disguised demon.[45] Another association came with the idea that most magical creatures worked at night or sprung out of the darkness. Finally, among the vagrants who plagued the towns and cities of England at the time of Shakespeare, one of the most infamous groups was known at once for the dark complexions of its members, their declared connections with Africa, and their practice of magic.[46] There had been repeated anti-gypsy legislation for more than one hundred years that complained of the same magical practices described in the 1786 Act *for the Punishment of certain Persons calling themselves Egiptians.*[47] In that Act gypsies are said to be saying "that they by Palmestrye could tell Mens and Womens Fortune" and to be "using greate suttle and craftye meanes to deceyve the Kinges Subjectes . . . using their olde accustomed develishe and noughty practises and devises, withe suche abhominable lyving as is not in any Christian Realme to be permitted named or knowen."[48] These observations indicate that the link between dark people and magic was a trope with which Shakespeare's audience was already familiar. Othello's alienation both in terms of his stage presence -- his different colour would endow him with a degree of singularity -- and in terms of the play's setting -- a land strange to him --would also confirm his tendencies to magic in spectators' minds.[49]

But, despite the currency of the "black" - "magic" metaphor and although Brabantio accuses Othello of using evil magic to bend Desdemona's will, from the audience's point of view the really evil magician in the play is Iago. Othello's defense indicates the rational instruments used in his wooing of Desdemona. He explains that his love for Desdemona came only after her father's love and invitation brought him to their house, that at Brabantio's and Desdemona's requests he told them the story of his life, and finally that she herself requested him to woo her (1.3.128-29, 152-3, 164-6). Othello's account of his own history implies a predictability, an order, and a trustworthiness in his character that accord more with the natural than the magical.[50] In contrast, Iago's almost exclusive use of the present and future tenses and his omission of all but his briefest history imply a chaos and a frenetic behaviour suspiciously trickster- or sorcerer-like.[51] If Othello uses any magic, it is a benevolent one -- nothing but poetry. As Gayle Greene points out, "With language, Othello conjures the love of Desdemona -- "This only is the witchcraft I have us'd" (1.2.169) -- but with words, Iago conjures hate in its place . . ."[52] From one point of view the handkerchief Othello has given Desdemona, with its powers to keep him in love with her as long as she does not lose it, might be considered a kind of magic used by him. But there is little in the play to suggest that he has given it to her for reasons of control. Iago is, in fact, the one who makes use of Othello's belief about the handkerchief to control. His most intricately woven and devious plot uses Othello's faith in the magic attributed to it, so that Othello appears to be more controlled by the handkerchief's magic than to be using it to monitor Desdemona's love -- the power it has after all is over Othello's love for Desdemona. Another proof against the charge that Othello has forced her consent or manipulated her love is that Desdemona attests that she freely "consecrated" her "soul and fortunes . . . to his honours, and his valiant parts" and begs to accompany him to Cyprus; Othello confirms her freedom when he then demands, "let her will / Have a free way" (1.3.253-4, 260-1). When Iago's witchcraft is uncovered to the audience, the charge crumbles further.

Iago's magic, however, manifests itself step by step. His initial invocations of "poison" and "plaguing flies," his self-proclaimed pretence, his cunning planting of jealousy in Roderigo, and of fear and lack of confidence in Othello, his god-like confidence in defining love and predicting the future, his unbounded self-love for the sake of which he would transform himself to another species -- he says he would change his "humanity with a baboon" -- all hint at a tinkering with nature and a supernatural akin to magic (1.1.68-71; 1.2.14-17, 33; 1.3.335-6, 349-52, 312-16). In his conversation with Desdemona he himself describes the unnatural and destructive effects of his "invention" -- "my invention," he says, "Comes from my pate as birdlime does from frieze, / It plucks out brain and all" (2.1.125-7). Again suggesting the unnatural or supernatural, he plans to use "as little a web as this" to "ensnare as great a fly as Cassio," to use "tricks" to put Cassio out of Othello's favour and to cause disease, "Even to madness," in Othello's mind, "That judgement cannot cure"(2.1.168-72, 296-306). By Act 2 the audience knows well that the words he speaks to others are lies. Therefore, when he professes to use wit and not witchcraft (2.3.362), the opposite is understood to be true, and he is suspected of being the real witch of *Othello* . In his monologues he reveals himself, honestly -- that he has used "poison" to change Othello and "little acts" that make Othello's imaginings "Burn like the mines of sulphur" (3.3.330-4). With his manipulation of Othello's belief in the handkerchief and his repetition of "monstrous" images, Othello is transformed into a monster, Iago -- clearly the demon behind Othello's change -- crying out, "Work on, / My medicine, work" (4.1.44-45). His final nomination as "demi-devil," "Spartan dog" and "hellish villain" sets him firmly in the domain of evil magic (5.2.302, 362, 369). Iago's own unnatural management of the hero's will, thus foregrounded, overshadows all the earlier accusations that Othello used magic to influence Desdemona's will.

As for Othello's own free consent, he is the only one who talks about it. He says, "But that I love the gentle Desdemona," he says to Iago, "I would not my unhoused free condition / Put into circumscription and confine / For the sea's worth" (1.2.25-28). Here he indicates that he is deliberately abandoning an adventurous life free of the constraints of family because he loves Desdemona. That he is “unhoused” suggests that he is perhaps exiled from his homeland; at least he does not have a home. Carol McGinnis Kay's notes "that the Moor is unique among Shakespeare's tragic heroes in having no known family background" .[53] But we know that he has a mother and father, because he tells us about how the handkerchief kept his father’s love for his mother from the time she received it from an Egyptian charmer. His mother and father must be deceased, otherwise he would not have the handkerchief himself. If he is not in possession of his parents’ home, there must be some reason -- perhaps some sort of violence was committed against him, or perhaps he abandoned it out of grief, or took to the sea for the love of adventure. Whatever the reasons for his being “unhoused” the change that he is willing to accept for the love of Desdemona implies that his consent to marry her is full and free. On the other hand, the accusation that it was unnatural for Desdemona to marry him (3.3.327) could more reasonably, in view of the enormous change in way of life that his marriage will entail, be made concerning him -- perhaps he is the victim of Desdemona's magic. This idea is indeed taken up in the play.

As with Othello, magic and robbery are connected with Desdemona in ways that highlight the motifs of consent. At the close of the refutation of the argument that Othello has used magic to beguile Desdemona of her consent, her father implies that she may be the one with guile -- "Look to her, Moor, have a quick eye to see: / She has deceiv'd her father, may do thee" (1.3.292-3). Iago further uses the idea of magic to suggest to Othello that Desdemona's consent was not true consent but a trick of some sort. By reminding Othello of her father's suspicions, he suggests to him that she has used witchcraft to accomplish their elopement:

> She that so young could give out such a seeming,
> To seal her father's eyes up, close as oak,
> He thought 'twas witchcraft . . .
> (3.3.212-14)

A few lines later Iago supplies reasons to support his accusation. Othello knows that Desdemona freely chose him -- "For she had eyes, and chose me" (3.3.193), but Iago hints that it is unnatural that she chose Othello over ordinary Venetians. As Othello begins to doubt Desdemona's love, musing, "And yet how nature erring from itself --" Iago interrupts:

> Ay, there's the point: as, to be bold with you,
> Not to affect many proposed matches,
> Of her own clime, complexion, and degree,
> Whereto we see in all things nature tends;
> Fie, we may smell in such a will most rank,
> Foul disproportion; thoughts unnatural.
> (3.3.231-7)

Perhaps Othello's willingness to go along with Iago's inferences stems from his belief that his father's assent to love his mother was influenced by the magical handkerchief that he has now passed to his own bride. "[T]hat handkerchief," he tells Desdemona

> Did an Egyptian to my mother give,
> She was a charmer, and could almost read
> The thoughts of people; she told her, while she kept it
> 'Twould make her amiable, and subdue my father
> Entirely to her love: but if she lost it,
> Or made a gift of it, my father's eye
> Should hold her loathly, and his spirits should hunt
> After new fancies. . .
> (3.4.53-61)

Though Desdemona's loss of the handkerchief "causes" Othello to lose his love for her, the audience would not necessarily see this as a confirmation of its powers. Despite their general belief in magic, Othello's renewed love witnessed in the last scene and Iago's obvious manipulation of his feelings would indicate more natural causes.

Besides magic, Iago extends the idea of robbery to Desdemona, by suggesting that she is the thief of Othello's name and, in another way, by identifying her with a stolen purse that is worthless compared to the reputation and honour lost when a man is made a cuckold:

> Good name in man and woman's dear, my lord;
> Is the immediate jewel of our souls:
> Who steals my purse, steals trash, 'tis something, nothing,
> 'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands:
> But he that filches from me my good name
> Robs me of that which not enriches him,
> And makes me poor indeed.
> (3.3.159-65)

Iago goes on to compare an unfaithful Desdemona to riches subject to insecurity (3.3.176-8). Finally, Othello himself speaks of her as a thief and himself as having been robbed:

> What sense had I of her stol'n hours of lust?
> . . .
> He that is robb'd, not wanting what is stol'n,
> Let him not know't, and he's not robb'd at all.
> (3.3.344, 348-9)

When Othello recognizes in the last scene that Iago has "ensnar'd" his "soul and body" (5.2.303), Desdemona's innocence is finally proven and the images of magic and burglary painted on her are finally shown to be false. Her forgiving Othello and taking the blame for her own murder when she replies to Emilia's question "who has done this deed?" with "Nobody, I myself, farewell: / Commend me to my kind lord, O farewell" is added evidence of her free and sincere consent to continued marriage with Othello and of her great love for him (5.2.125-6).

Unlike the main sources of *All's Well That Ends Well* and *The Merchant of Venice,* the main source of *Othello* explicitly discusses matters of choice in marriage. Nevertheless, the discussion in the Italian story does not make the issue any more obvious than does Shakespeare's play. In its introduction Giraldi Cinthio's *Gli Hecatommithi* talks about the prerequisites for a peaceful family life. The "wise" narrator Fabio notes "that peace can be found only in the love that comes of counsel and chooses well," in a love "ruled by reason" and compatible with "what accords with ends both honest and suitable."[54] In his explanation about the necessity of "using judgement" when choosing a wife or husband, he says that "first they should consider only the nature and quality of the persons with whom they might join themselves in perpetual bonds," and then "the quality, manners, life and habits of the men or women, their mothers, fathers, families, antiquity, rank, and other such factors which are manifest signs of the natures and lives of other people."[55] These warnings would be related by hearers or readers to the story recounted thereafter of a Moor of Venice who married the Venetian Disdemona. Disdemona's failure to follow the narrator's advice to consider family background -- "mothers, fathers, families, antiquity" -- and culture -- "the quality, manners, life and habits of the men or women" -- would thus be considered unwise. However, what is stressed within the story is Disdemona and the Moor's defiance of family counsel: ". . . although the Lady's relatives did all they could to make her take another husband, they were united in marriage . . ."[56] Disdemona explicitly links her misfortune to her not obtaining parental consent:

> . . . and I fear greatly that I shall be a warning to young girls not to marry against their parents' wishes; and Italian ladies will learn by my example not to tie themselves to a man whom Nature, Heaven, and manner of life separate from us.[57]

There are no references to robbery, but Othello's "blackness" is suggested to him as the reason for Disdemona's unfaithfulness, and magic in the sense that her name signifies "unfortunate" is partly blamed for her tragedy.[58] In the Italian story the father is held responsible for choosing the fate-laden title of his child. These reasons, along with the Moor's gullibility, are cited at the end of the story, so that the question of parental consent is not underlined as it might have been. The changes made by Shakespeare not only include the repetitions of Desdemona and Othello's failure to ask Brabantio's consent, but entail the additional discussion of Desdemona's free consent. While Shakespeare's Moor is more valiant, more eloquent, and more noble than Cinthio's, the tragedy that follows the marriage implies similar attitudes to interracial marriage and parental consent.

On the other hand, Shakespeare's different use in *Othello* of the generic elements of the typical domestic tragedies produced around the same time implies a questioning of these attitudes. Brian Shaffer notes that the "[t]hematic trappings of Elizabethan domestic tragedy . . . abound in *Othello:* marriage, adultery, jealousy, the idea of women [as inherently evil], and issues of epistemology," like "the reality of adultery and the illusion of fidelity."[59] As in the other domestic tragedies of the period, *Othello* "opens soon after a wedding and closes with the deaths of spouses and servants, . . . is heavily reliant upon the acts (and spying) of servants who murder on behalf of one of the two spouses, employs an abundance of sexually suggestive language and includes a 'Scaffold Speech,'" has "fewer characters" and a "condensed time frame."[60] But in *Othello* these structural and tropic conventions of the Elizabethan domestic tragedy contradict customary views. There is a "betrayal of generic expectations," as Shaffer observes, particularly of the expectation that death occurs as a result of a wife's infidelity.[61] But more than this, the traditional views of both blacks and parental consent are also over-turned. Because the chief criticizer of colour and marriage without paternal consent is a conspicuous liar, the play itself becomes the proponent of the black "race" and marriage free from patriarchal intervention. *Othello* bears enough resemblance to the domestic tragedies of its epoch for it to be recognized as one of the genre. Because of this the intentionality of its deviations are all the more obvious and therefore more effective.

Two other sources relevant to *Othello's* magic have recently been identified, one that shows a relationship between the words of Jesus and Judas and those of Othello and his antagonists and the second one that relates Iago's creativity to Giovanni Boccaccio's explanation in *Genealogiae* of the love born of "the blind mind and the obstinate heart" from the union of Night and Erebus.[62] Peter Milward's and Anthony DiMatteo's arguments are too long to be noted here, but I mention some of the correspondences they establish, which concern the impingement of race on the play's representation of consent. Milward identifies more than half a dozen statements of Othello that are closely aligned to those of Jesus as recorded in the Bible, making it hard not to believe that the Elizabethans would have seen in him a parallel to Christ and, therefore, a representation of divine magic. DiMatteo, on the other hand, finds in Iago's language numerous allusions to Greek mythology concerning demonic love and Cerberus the dog of hell. Boccaccio's records of these myths had been published since 1494 and as the "most famous of early humanist works on myth" would have been familiar to a portion of the English population.[63] The liaisons DiMatteo establishes between Iago and the devilish Cerberus and the evil child born of Hell and Night argue for a still firmer link between this villain and evil magic. The divinely magical rhetoric of Othello and Iago's demonic supernaturalism are further evidence either that Shakespeare is downplaying the issues of race and parental consent in *Othello,* or that he is raising views on these issues which are opposite to those prevalent in Elizabethan society.

Before his death Othello pleads,

> . . . I pray you in your letters,
> When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
> Speak of them as they are; nothing extenuate,
> Nor set down aught in malice. . . .
> (5.2.341-4)

He and Desdemona, in their exchange of consents, and in their defence of those consents before the Venetian Senate and those who doubt their love, "have spoken them as they are." However, the context in which they speak is fraught with malice and distrust. Within such an "unlucky" context, the thieves are honest and the honest are thieves, the devils are straightforward and the straightforward are devils. At one time or another Iago attributes theft and magic to both Othello and Desdemona, but as the play unfolds Iago's own theft and magic are revealed. Unfortunately, however, in the process Othello becomes entangled in Iago's magic, so that when Iago finally subsumes his real character in his performance at the end of the play, Othello has transformed his seeming but unreal evil into real devilish acts. The audience knows that Iago's final performance truly manifests his character and that Othello's evil is carried out as a result of Iago's magician-empowered acting. Therefore, in the end Othello's and Desdemona's "light wing'd toys" do not "foil", but are foiled (1.3.268-9). Their sincere voicings of love are slain like butterflies in the syrup of hypocritical hate and racial slander that surrounds them. Their tragic ending reveals their innocence and thus supports their kind of marital consent -- unmotivated as it was by considerations of colour or race.

Notes

[1] (3.3.402; 5.2.345) William Shakespeare, *Othello,* ed. M. R. Ridley (Arden) (London and New York: Routledge, 1989; first published in 1958). All following quotations are taken from this edition.

[2] The trope of burglary in *Othello* is addressed by Neil Taylor, "'Look well to their linen,'" *Longman Critical Essays: Othello,* ed. Linda Cookson and Bryan Loughrey (Longman, 1991) 119-26. See also Peter Stallybrass, "Patriarchal Territories: The Body Enclosed," *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe,* ed. Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan and Nancy J. Vickers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986) 134-6.

[3] For discussions of *Othello's* magic, see Emily C. Bartels, "Making More of the Moor: Aaron, Othello, and Renaissance Refashionings of Race," *Shakespeare Quarterly* (1990) 41: 4, 433-54; Nancy Gutierrez, "Witchcraft and Adultery in Othello: Strategies of Subversion," *Playing With Gender: A Renaissance Pursuit,* ed. Jean R. Brink and Maryanne C. Horowitz (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991); Kenneth Gross, "Slander and Skepticism in Othello," *ELH* (1989) 56: 4, 819-52; Martin Orkin, " Othello and the 'plain face,' Of Racism" *Shakespeare Quarterly* (1987) 38: 2, 177-8. In "Patriarchy and Jealousy in *Othello* and *The Winter's Tale,*" Derek Cohen argues against the simplistic categorizing of Othello's crime as a deed done under Iago's magic (*Modern Language Quarterly* (1987) 48: 3, 207-23). See especially page 214. He and Stallybrass link Othello's abuse of Desdemona to cultural misogyny.

[4] According to Michael Banton the earliest record of the word "race" in English occurs in *The Dance of the Sevin Deadly Sins* (1508) by the Scottish poet William Dunbar. Banton notes that it was a Frenchman François Bernier who first used the word "as the basis for a taxonomy of mankind." In his essay (1684) Bernier classified people into four or five "races" based on their "skin colour, hair, and physiognomy." *Race Relations* (New York: Basic Books, 1967) 16.

[5] Qtd. in *Marriage and Love in England: Modes of Reproduction 1300-1840* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986) 242.

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[6] Martin Ingram, footnote 21, "Spousal Litigation in the English Ecclesiastical Courts, c. 1350-1640," *Marriage and Society: Studies in the Social History of Marriage,* ed. R. B. Outhwaite (London: Europa Publications, 1981), 40.

[7] Margaret Loftus Ranald, *Shakespeare and His Social Context* (New York: AMS Press, 1987) 6.

[8] Linda Woodbridge, "Palisading the Body Politic," *True Rites and Maimed Rites: Ritual and Anti-Ritual in Shakespeare and His Age,* ed. Linda Woodbridge and Edward Berry (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992) 274-5. In footnote 1 she also notes references in *Cymbeline* to "sex as burglary" at 1.6.15 and 2.2.41-42 (293).

[9] William Shakespeare, *All's Well That Ends Well,* ed. G.K. Hunter (London: Methuen (Arden), 1986) First published 1959.

[10] Martin Ingram, 39-41.

[11] Martin Ingram, 50.

[12] Michael Neill illustrates that in the eyes of the Elizabethans children were by definition illegitimate if they were born of different races. ("Unproper Beds: Race, Adultery, and the Hideous in *Othello,*" *Shakespeare Quarterly* (1989) 40: 4, 409.)

[13] Orkin, 166-7; Eldred Jones, *Othello's Countrymen* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965) 12-13.

[14] Ann Jennalie Cook, *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London, 1576-1642* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981) 256.

[15] 17 February 1580, *Journal of the Commons, 8 November 1547-2 March 1628* (rpr. 1803) 123, 127.

[16] The same thing could be said about women. Valerie Wayne and many other critics point out that woman was practically equivalent to adultery in the minds of some Elizabethan men, as reflected in the literature of the period (and throughout *Othello* itself). "Historical Differences: Misogyny and *Othello, The Matter of Difference: Materialist Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare,* ed. Valerie Wayne, aft. Catherine Belsey (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991) 153-79.

[17] Jeremiah 13:23-27, Geneva version.

[18] According to Bartels, this "history" was available "throughout Europe, primarily in Latin but also in Italian and French, from 1550 onwards" (435).

[19] Leo Africanus, *History and Description of Africa,* trans. John Pory, ed. Robert Brown (1600; rpr. New York, 1896) I, 180, 187.

[20] John Polemon, *The Second Part of the Book of Battailes, Fought in Our Age* (London, 1587), sigs. Yi r and Yiii r, qtd. in Anthony Gerard Barthelemy, *Black Face*

Maligned Race: The Representation of Blacks in English Drama from Shakespeare to Southerne (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1987) 77.

[21] Vickers states: "A structuralist who ascribed these dichotomies to the play, ignoring the characters, would simply destroy drama as a representation of human interaction." *Appropriating Shakespeare: Contemporary Critical Quarrels* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993) 75-76.

[22] Martin Ingram, 51.

[23] Traister writes that in the English Renaissance "demonic and natural magic were distinguished by a single incontrovertible difference -- demonic magic was performed with the aid of spirits; natural magic was not" (Barbara Howard Traister, *Heavenly Necromancers: The Magician in English Renaissance Drama* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1984) 5).

[24] Traister, 50.

[25] Roger Bastide, "Color, Racism, and Christianity," *Color and Race,* ed. and introd. John Hope Franklin (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968) 38.

[26] Banton, 101.

[27] Jack D'Amico, *The Moor in English Renaissance Drama* (Tampa: University of South Florida Press, 1991) 10-13.

[28] Aristotle's attribution of nature to slavery in these words, "Those who are so much inferior to others as is the body to the soul, and beasts to men, are by nature slaves and benefit, like all inferiors, from living under the rule of a master," quoted by Banton (12), continued to be used as a justification for the buying and selling of people until the nineteenth century (Banton 128).

[29] A translation of an early anonymous Latin texts reads: "un teint noir indique une personne légère, pacifique, pusillanime et retorse: c'est le type des habitants des régions méridionales, comme sont les Ethiopiens, les Egyptiens et leurs voisins. Un teint blanc rosé indique des gens doués de courage et de force d'âme: c'est le type des habitants des contrées septentionales" (Anonyme latin, *Traité de physiognomonie* (Paris, 1981) 79, qtd. in Marie-Hélène Marganne, "De la physiognomonie dans l'Antiquité Gréco-Romaine," *Rhétoriques du corps,* ed. Philippe Dubois et Yves Winkin (Bruxelles: De Boeck-Wesmael, 1988) 15).

[30] Africanus, I, 187; Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1554; rpr. London, 1927), IV, 57. Cited by Barthelemy, 5.

[31] Sir John Hayward, *Annals of the first four years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth,* ed. J. Bruce (Camden Society, 1840) 6-7, qtd. in Richard Salter, *Documents and Debates: Elizabeth I and her Reign* (London: Macmillan Education, 1988) 8.

[32] William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice,* ed. John Russell Brown (Arden) (London and New York: Routledge, 1989) First published in 1964.

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[33] Hakluyt writes that these people are "so scorched and vexed with the heat of the sunne, that in many places they curse it when it riseth" (IV, 57).

[34] Desdemona, as pointed out by Edward Berry, makes an association between Othello and the hot sun of Africa in her remark, "I think the sun where he was born / Drew all such humors from him" (3.4.26-27). "Othello's Alienation," *Studies in English Literature* (1990) 321-2.

[35] Paul A. Cantor, "The Erring Barbarian among the Supersubtle Venetians," *Southwest Review* (1990) 75: 3, 300.

[36] Barthelemy draws attention to W. L. Hildburgh's remark that in "medieval English alabaster sculpture, 'The very dark faces of the torturers and other iniquitous persons are black.'" W. L. Hildburgh, "Medieval English Alabasters,: *Archaeologia,* XCIII (1949) 76, qtd. in Barthelemy, 4.

[37] See Emblem 2, 13 from Frances Quarles's *Emblems* (1635), in Murray Roston, *Renaissance Perspectives in Literature and the Visual Arts* (Princeton University Press, 1987) 332.

[38] D'Amico observes that in English Renaissance drama "Moors as a people, and the individual, whether receptive to Western values or defiantly opposite, remained a threatening presence" (119). Philip Massinger's *The Renegado* (1624) is just one example of literary works of the period that identify Moorish "black" with devilishness (121-122).

[39] Barthelemy, 25.

[40] Ben Jonson, "The Masque of Blackness," *Ben Jonson: The Complete Masques,* ed. Stephen Orgel (New Haven, 1969).

[41] The statement of one scholar: "Pratiquement inconnu dans la vie courante, le Nègre apparaît rarement dans la littérature médiévale," suggests that not all the links between evil and the colour black found in medieval art was a result of racial prejudice. It also implies that the surge in art focussed on blacks was related to the increase in European and African interaction and possibly to the increase in the numbers of blacks in England. See Léon-François Hoffmann, *Le nègre romantique* (Paris: Payot, 1973) 17.

[42] Barnabe Barnes, *The Devil's Charter: A Tragedie Containing the Life and Death of Pope Alexander the Sixt* , ed. R. B. McKerrow, (1904; rpr. Vaduz: Kraus Reprint, 1963) 339-40, qtd. in Traister, 58.

[43] Thomas Middleton, *The Triumphs of Truth,* in *The Works of Thomas Middleton,* ed. A. H. Bullen (New York, 1964) VII, 249, qtd in Barthelemy, 65.

[44] See Frank M. Snowden, Jr., *Before Color Prejudice: The Ancient View of Blacks* (Cambridge, MS and London, England, 1983). Looking at the pictures in this book and in Renaissance art books, we might compare the comely "negroid" faces of early Egyptian carvings and the third / fourth century Thaenae mosaic of a wealthy couple, in

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which the husband is black and the wife is white and both are surrounded by cherubs, with the 1521 Uffizi drawing of "the Negress Catherine," whose downcast eyes, plain hair, homely features and poor clothing betoken guilt and degradation. René Huyghe, ed., *Larousse Encyclopedia of Renaissance and Baroque Art* (London: Paul Hamlyn, 1964) Illus. 335, 153.

[45] Traister, 14.

[46] Neill notes: "In Jonson's *Volpone* the bastard nature of Volpone's 'true . . . family' is redoubled by their having been 'begot on . . . Gypsies, and Jews, and black-moors'" (1.1.506-7). (Note 73, 409).

[47] In 1554 punishments were instituted for anyone bringing gypsies into England; gypsies entering the country would have their property confiscated and would be sentenced to death. Those already in the country were subject to the same punishments if they did not leave within forty days. Other acts more severe in character were instituted later in the century (Angus Fraser, *The Gypsies* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) 131-3).

[48] Great Britain (1786), "1 & 2 Philip and Mary c. 4," 469-70, 242, qtd. in Barry Taylor, *Vagrant Writing: Social and Semiotic Disorders in the English Renaissance* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991) 58-59.

[49] Berry discusses the roots of Othello's alienation in his "exoticism," his geographic and cultural displacement, and his own unsuccessful "attempts to transcend the constricting framework of assimilation or inferiority not by breaking free of it but by asserting, in death, that its opposite extremes are both true" (321, 323, 330).

[50] Commenting on Othello's "storied self" James Calderwood notes how "the act of telling about himself subtly subverts Othello's domination of speech and, through speech, his domination of the Senate and of Desdemona and Brabantio" (295). I think the attribution of domination here is misplaced, because in both instances Othello has been asked to talk about himself and his past. The significance of his history-telling is, rather, that Othello convinces his audience by references to past events whose outcome and hence value are known and that his exposé of himself is long enough and connected enough to conform to the traditional manner of reliable witnesses. Iago's lack of this suggests the manipulating statistician or wily commercialist who slips in the smallest facts here and there to create a false but self-promoting image. Later Calderwood observes a deterioration in Othello's syntax as he comes under the influence of Iago (299). See James L. Calderwood, "Speech and Self in *Othello,*" *Shakespeare Quarterly* (1987) 38: 3, 293-303.

[51] Vickers points out that the "two main forms" of "Iago's confidences to us" are "plain statements of facts. . . characteristically in the present tense" and "statements of intention cast in the future tense" (*Appropriating Shakespeare,* 79). Iago's speech in dialogue follows the same trend.

[52] Gayle Greene, "'But Words Are Words': Shakespeare's Sense of Language in *Othello,*" *Etudes Anglaises* (1981) 34: 3, 270.

[53] "Othello's Need for Mirrors," *Shakespeare Quarterly* (1983) 34: 3, 264.

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[54] Giraldi Cinthio, Giovanni Battista, "From *Gli Hecatommithi,*" (1566 ed.), *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare,* ed. Geoffrey Bullough, VII (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973) 239.

[55] Giraldi Cinthio, 240.

[56] Giraldi Cinthio, 242.

[57] Giraldi Cinthio, 248.

[58] Giraldi Cinthio, 245, 252.

[59] Brian W. Shaffer, "'To manage private and domestic quarrels': Shakespeare's *Othello* and the Genre of Elizabethan Domestic Tragedy," *Iowa State Journal of Research* (1988) 62: 3, 448-9.

[60] Shaffer, 449.

[61] Shaffer, 450.

[62] See Peter Milward, S. J. "More on 'the base Judean,'" *Notes and Queries* (1989) 36: 3, 329-31 and Anthony DiMatteo, "The Genealogy of Evil in *Othello:* Iago's 'Hell and Night,'" *Notes and Queries* (1992) 39: 3, 331-34.

[63] DiMatteo, 332-3.

Chapter 5

A Political Dimension: Freedom of Consent and Government in *The Tempest*

Except for the reign of the phoenix upon one tree, presumably after its spontaneous regeneration from its ashes,[1] the governments spoken of in *The Tempest* are all in some way analogous with discussions of marital consent and progeny. Three sorts of government, one tyrannic, the second utopian, and the third law-centred, are cited respectively in connection with three sorts of consent. The consent related to the tyrannic government is equivalent to no consent, because it entails rape or forceful mating. Free love or a non-exclusive consent offered to multiple partners outside the frame of marriage appears to be connected with the utopian government. The law-oriented government provides for free choice on the part of both male and female, followed by the consent of the bride's father. In looking at these representations, I hope to explore how *The Tempest* uses images of varied political systems to convey a particular view of marital consent. In its representations of different governments *The Tempest* aligns them in different ways with "foreignness" so that the "foreign" becomes further connected to a certain attitude to marital consent. The focus of this study on marital consent does not permit me to fully delineate my position on the Prospero / imperialist and Caliban / colonized metaphors, which are so central to recent discussions of the play. My thesis that the play is largely concerned with ideas on government and marital consent implies that these metaphors are more a product of the prejudiced society Shakespeare was addressing and to which he had to present relevant and appealing images than evidence of his project to justify an imperialist oppression of colonized peoples.[2] Nevertheless, in presenting the idea that marital consent should be free of political and other constraints, Shakespeare makes use of the English tradition of demeaning whatever is foreign to disvalidate forced consent .

Although several of the characters in the play have lived under tyrannic governments and several of them seek to establish tyrannies, Caliban -- apparently the most foreign of them -- is the one whose predilection for tyranny is most prominently displayed and most firmly linked with forced marriage or forced mating. With his aggressive nature, his fish fins, his mysterious descent from the Algerian Sycorax and an unknown father, and his freckled face -- freckles being typical of the Scottish and Irish people, who were also called "wild people,"[3] Caliban has a number of the features with which the English identified foreigners -- a different appearance, a history of rebellion, hypersexuality,[4] and connections with the unknown.[5] Michel de Montaigne, Shakespeare's French contempory, sums up this common habit of creating a barbarous foreign land out of whatever is unknown: "Or, je trouve, . . . qu'il n'y a rien de barbare et de sauvage en cette nation [de Athlantide], à ce qu'on m'en a rapporté, sinon que chacun appelle barbarie ce qui nest pas de son usage; comme de vray il semble que nous n'avons autre mire de la verité et de la raison que l'exemple et idée des opinions et usances du païs où nous sommes."[6] The anxiety over foreigners and their influence upon the English people in London was particularly acute around the time *The Tempest* was written.[7] At the time of its early performances in 1611 and in 1613, the latter for King James, official actions were being taken to limit the influence of aliens.[8] The following comment of Jacob Rathgeb, secretary to the Duke of Wüttemburg, (translated from the German) suggests that foreigners were disparaged in the London of this period:

> The inhabitants [of London] are magnificently apparelled and are extremely proud and overbearing; and because the greater part, especially the trades-people, seldom go into other countries, but always remain in their houses in the city attending to their business, they care little for foreigners, but scoff and laugh at them . . .[9]

Another complaint (translated from the Italian), this time directed to Queen Elizabeth, observed that "in England a foreigner is neither believed nor valued."[10]

The remark of David Theo Goldberg in his essay on "The Social Formation of Racial Discourse" that "As a mode of exclusion, racist discourse assumes authority and is vested with power, literally and symbolically, in bodily terms"[11] applies also to political discourse. Among the various bodily features and functions which might be used in support of racial or political discourse, those relating to sex are the most sensitive, and of these rape has long been prominent. The link between rape and different appearance has been noted in the discussion of the burglary imagery in *Othello*. It was commonplace for Elizabethans, as with people today, to associate violent and illicit sex with the persecuted or marginal sectors of society, sectors to which foreigners were usually consigned. For example, the author of *The Lavves Resolvtions of Womens Rights* (1632) refers to rape carried out by the Romans,[12] and in its reference to Elizabeth's statute 18 to control rape it mentions only "the case of a Scot"[13] -- the crime is each time exemplifed by a reference to foreigners.

Linking foreigners with rape was an effective way to control their influence, because according to some accounts of the early known history of England rape and forced marriage, from which rape was not easily distinguished, were looked upon as a terrible crimes. Records of laws from Anglo-Saxon times mention "an edict of Clothair I in 560" that forbade "the forcing of women to marry against their will." Other records of the period corroborate this information:

> According to the Laws of Cnut, no woman or girl could be compelled to marry a man whom she disliked. In an Anglo-Saxon betrothal formula from the tenth century the girl's consent is unconditionally required.[14]

With marriage itself often constituted solely by sexual intercourse at this and later times, the question of female consent is more significant -- such consent, in fact, would be the only factor whereby rape might be distinguished from marriage. The punishments in England, though usually severe for rape, varied from hanging to blinding, gelding, the confiscation of possessions and the cutting off of the hands and feet.[15] In Elizabethan times it appears that, more often than violent men, parents were the cause of forced marriage -- a practice that was the subject of vociferous discussion. Nevertheless, forced sex as in rape was held to be incomparably more reprehensible than being forced by one's parents into a hated marriage.[16] Queen Elizabeth's statute 18 decreed that rapists "should suffer death and forfeit as in cases of felony . . ., without allowance of privilege, or benefit of clergy.[17]

As rape was associated with foreigners, so was it with tyranny. The English words "rape" and "rapine," meaning to take property by force, as in war, have the same root in the Latin *rapere,* meaning to seize. English defeats abroad were inevitably described as a result of the tyranny of some foreign country, whose soldiers were also lechers.[18] The following excerpt from the Archbishop of Canterbury's *A Brief Description of the whole World* (1636) shows that tyranny, like rape, was assigned to foreigners and condemned:

> The maner of government which of late yeers hath bin used in Russia is very barbarous, & little less than tyrannous: for the Emperour that last was, did suffer his people to be kept in great servility, & permitted the Rulers & chiefe Officers at their pleasures, to pill & ransack the common fort.[19]

The association of rape with tyranny may also stem from the effects of rape on a woman's freedom. In her introduction to *The Renaissance Englishwoman in Print: Counterbalancing the Canon,* Betty Travitsky comments on the social anxiety caused by the movement of large numbers of single women into London, that occurred because these women were not effectively contained in the traditional manner -- through marriage, that is by being possessed by a man.[20] Like marriage, rape might make a woman "unavailable," either because of her own aversion to men following the experience of violence, or because men were not interested in her non-virgin body, or because her being raped was interpreted as evidence of her own promiscuous behaviour. But unlike marriage, which a woman could sometimes refuse, rape was as an inescapable containment, and therefore it could exert an even stronger control over women than Elizabethan marriage practices.[21] Its association with tyrannic government, then, seems reasonable.

This association of rape or forceful sexual activity and tyranny with the foreigner is evident in the literature of the period. For example, in the play *Sir Thomas More* (1592-93) the rebel Francis de Barde who instigates the May Day uprising is an Italian; besides his anti-governmental activities he tries to make love to numerous women, some of them married.[22] Shakespeare's plays sometimes portray similar attitudes. As A. J. Hoenselaars notes, in *Richard III* King Richard "depicts the French as traditional lechers who pose a threat to their wives and daughters at home" (5.3.337-8), whereas the French Queen Margaret of the *Henry VI* plays is frequently tyrannic in her behaviour.[23] Hoenselaars observes, too, that the motivation for such literary representations was frequently political:

> If "The libelle of Englysche polycye" [1436] may safely be deemed the most complete pre-Renaissance catalogue of antiforeign prejudice in England, it is worth noting that it contained no pronounced antipathy towards the Spaniards. This situation remained unchanged until the mid-sixteenth century when Mary Tudor took Philip the Second for her husband. Fearing a Spanish takeover by the consort, the English began to describe the Spaniards as subtle, mischievous, tyrannous, lecherous, ambitious, and disdainful. The most important additions to this inventory were made after the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, an event popularly seen as testifying to both Iberian pride and cowardice.[24]

Hence in Robert Wilson's *The Three Lord and Three Ladies of London* (1588) the character "Tyranny" is of Spanish nationality, and in *The Northern Lass* (1629) a lecherous Englishman must pose as a Spaniard in order to visit a prostitute.[25] In *The Tempest* Caliban's attitudes to marital consent that are manifested in his attempted rape of Miranda and his contention that such action was good is combined with his inclinations to tyrannic and self-centred government. His fish fins and his own bastard origin are a physical sign of his lechery,[26] and his Scottish freckles connect him with the rebellion, tyranny and foreignness of England's neighbours to the north.

There are a number of references in *The Tempest* to tyrannous government and its unpleasant results, even before Caliban's propensity for it is revealed. Each one is raised as a result of accusations put to Prospero about the justice of his own government. Miranda is the first one to suggest that Prospero's government is cruel:

> Had I been any god of power, I would
> Have sunk the sea within the earthe, or ere
> It should the good ship so have swallow'd, and
> The fraughting souls within her.
> (1.2.9-13)

Prospero assures her that the destruction of which he is the agent has a benefic end, "I have done nothing but in care of thee" (1.2.16). We remember, too, that though struck with deadly fear, those on the ship come to no serious harm. Almost every one of them benefits in some respect from the tempest. Therefore, although Prospero's justice at times appears harsh, his intention is loving and the outcome of his law is happiness and life. Showing the difference between Antonio's tyranny and his own justice, and in further defence of his equity, Prospero delineates the details of his and Miranda's exile. He explains to Miranda how he "cast" his government upon his "perfidious brother" (1.2.75, 68), who subsequently "set all hearts i' th' state / To what tune pleas'd his ear" (1.2.84-85). Antonio's practice of gearing the government according to his own pleasure rather than to the public good resulted in an abuse of power. For the trust Prospero bestowed on him, he returned malice (1.2.93-95). Antonio's tyrannous attitude was manifested, Prospero explains, by his affectation of majesty; he believed himself to be duke "out o' th' substitution / And executing th'outward face of royalty." Antonio's ambition to be "Absolute Milan" (1.2.109) led to his limiting the rights and freedoms of the people he governed -- he made a pact with Naples "To give him annual tribute, do him homage, / Subject his coronet to his crown" (1.2.113-14). By this action, Antonio bound his subjects to extra economic constraints and subordinated them to the rule of another, for the sole purpose of securing his own position and the increase of his power. His illegitimate acts facilitated the extension of the King of

Naple's powers beyond legitimate bounds; hence one tyranny gave birth to another tyranny. The King of Naples was glad about Antonio's interest in ousting Prospero, because he himself was Prospero's "inveterate" enemy (1.2.122). The army that in a just government is employed for the defense of its people was in this instance "treacherously" employed to "extirpate" Prospero (1.2.125). In the sense that it was levied in support of a person who had prostituted the freedom of the citizens of Milan, this army was a third tyrannous institution born out of Antonio's self-interest.

The second character to protest against Prospero's "tyranny" is Ariel. He reminds Prospero that he had promised him his liberty "a full year" (1.2.250). Ariel's remark angers Prospero, who is thus prompted to remind him of the tyranny from which he released him: "Thou liest, malignant thing! Hast thou forgot / The foul witch Sycorax, who with age and envy / Was grown into a hoop? hast thou forgot her?"(1.2.256-9) Prospero recalls that Sycorax was a criminal exiled from Algiers because of her "mischiefs manifold, and sorceries terrible / To enter human hearing" and that she treated Ariel much worse than he has (1.2.264-5):

> . . . Thou, my slave,
> As thou report'st thyself, was then her servant;
> And, for thou was a spirit too delicate
> To act her earthy and abhorr'd commands,
> Refusing her grand hests, she did confine thee,
> By help of her more potent ministers,
> And in her most unmitigable rage,
> Into a cloven pine; within which rift
> Imprison'd thou didst painfully remain
> A dozen years; within which space she died,
> And left thee there; where thou didst vent thy groan
> As fast as mill-wheels strike.
> (1.2.270-81)

Prospero further describes the pain Ariel experienced under the tyranny of Sycorax:

> . . . Thou best know'st
> What torment I did find thee in; thy groans
> Did make wolves howl, and penetrate the breasts
> Of ever-angry bears: it was a torment
> To lay upon the damn'd, which Sycorax
> Could not again undo . . .
> (1.2.286-91)

When Prospero threatens to "peg" Ariel in the "knotty entrails" of an oak for a punishment of duration equal to his captivity under Sycorax, he asks pardon and pledges to obey (1.2.294-6). After a brief interlude Ariel returns as a sea-nymph ready to discharge the services demanded by Prospero. The services are obviously not comparable to imprisonment within a pine tree, nor are they like the self-promoting services Antonio demanded of his people. Ariel attracts to shore and, by his song, calms the distraught Ferdinand. Earlier he protected all those caught in the tempest, and later he saves Gonzalo from the intrigues of his companions. To Antonio, Sebastian and Alonso, who all in some way have practiced tyranny, Ariel administers a remedy -- a banquet is set before them and then is suddenly removed as they are about to eat. As a result of this experience the three men are racked with guilt and forebodings of death that eventually lead them to abandon or at least control their greed for power. Therefore, although Ariel's behaviour is constrained under Prospero, it is not as with the other rulers and would-be rulers in the play, constrained for no apparent reason. Besides, the constraints that Prospero's government entails will be lifted. Sycorax was incapable of undoing her tyranny, as was Antonio, inasmuch as he had made an agreement with Alonso. Unlike Sycorax and Antonio, Prospero promises freedom to Ariel if he obeys: "Thou shalt be as free / As mountain winds: but then exactly do / All points of my command" (1.2.501-3). Prior to this liberty he must use his powers to support Prospero's government. Ariel functions, as the media does when it is controlled by vested interests, to reinforce and direct the population in accordance with the will of those in power. He makes Ferdinand think he has lost his father and therefore can act independently of him; he confuses those who plot to take Prospero's life. As with art, his strategies are utterly invisible and appear to those affected to come from their companions or their own minds. While such manipulation is often associated with tyrannic governments, all make use of it. The control exercised over people's freedom, however, is relative. In Shakespeare's *The Tempest,* Prospero is the only one who succeeds in making use of Ariel in this way. Under Sycorax and Caliban his powers were completely suppressed. While this latter condition would appear to afford greater freedom to the population, the only population at that time was Ariel himself and his freedoms were null.

Caliban is the third character to question the justice of Prospero's rule. In his view Prospero has unjustly usurped the government of his island from him:

> This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother,
> Which thou tak'st from me. When thou cam't first,
> Thou strok'st me, and made much of me. . .
> . . . and then I lov'd thee,
> And show'd thee all the qualities o' th' isle,
> The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile:
> Curs'd be I that did so! All the charms
> Of Sycorax, toad, beetles, bats, light on you!
> For I am all the subjects that you have,
> Which first was mine own King: and here you sty me
> In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me
> The rest o' th' island.
> (1.2.331-5, 338-46)

Later he complains, " I am subject to a tyrant, a sorcerer, that by his cunning hath cheated me of the island" (3.2.40-42). Brian Vickers has observed that Caliban's grounds for possession of the island may not be much more reasonable than Prospero's, because Sycorax from whom Caliban derived ownership of the island "had only landed there having been cast away, this time legally [unlike Prospero], by the citizens of Argier, 'for mischiefs manifold and sorceries terrible', who only spared her life because she was pregnant."[27] This argument bears some consideration because it reminds us of the possibility that the citizens of Argier may have some authority over the island. But, if they do not, then the first to inhabit it would have more rights over it than the second. Hence, Caliban's presence there prior to Prospero's gives him more right to the land. But to whom would the inhabitants of this island give the right to rule? It would appear in their advantage for Prospero to rule, because their freedom will be greater under him. Caliban himself certainly had more freedom when he was his "own King," but those inhabiting the island with him did not. Miranda's right to free consent, for example, was challenged and almost impeded. Under Caliban Ariel remained pegged in an oak, unable to make use of his extraordinary talents. While he is a slave to Prospero or at least said to be -- Prospero does not sell him as is the usual practice with slaves, he is given freedom to use his abilities, albeit only in accordance with Prospero's directions. Nevertheless, after a period of enslavement, Ariel will use his capacities the way he wishes.

From one point of view, Ariel's and Caliban's enslavement may be seen as a sort of accountability for their behaviour or a contract. It appears from Ariel's statements that he may have consented to be Prospero's slave for the period of one year in return for his freedom from imprisonment in the oak. The idea here is that one must offer gratitude, as in the form of enforced service to the state, in recognition of the benefits received from the state. That Ariel is constrained to offer his service for a little longer than a year suggests the magnanimity expected from every citizen towards his government when it has certain unexpected needs. The same sort of justice is applied to Caliban, who is welcomed into Prospero's precincts and accorded benefits, including the freedom to associate with other members of the state, such as Miranda. However, the day he violates the rights of his fellow members of the state, his own freedom must be curtailed. It appears that this was the reason Prospero enslaved Caliban; if so, then it may be justified as a legitimate action of a just government, because not to restrict his freedom would be to allow the greater freedoms of others to be hampered. Even so, though like Ariel Caliban is called a slave, Prospero never thinks of selling him; therefore he is treated more as a criminal than as a slave.

Besides, Prospero's government is less tyrannous than is Caliban's of himself and of others. When Caliban gets a chance to design his own government, it has all the characteristics of a tyranny -- its goal is selfish; its means are violent; its participants are ignorant and disrespectful of the rights of others. When he subjects himself to the ruler of his choice, he lets go of his own freedom and that of his would-be subjects. Like

Antonio in his subjugation of Milan to the despotism of the King of Naples (Alonso), Caliban plans to subject his island and its inhabitants to Stephano -- "a drunkard butler". Where Propero's enslavement of Caliban is accompanied by education within his own environment, Stephano's first thought is to enslave Caliban in order to remove him from his home or to sell him. In his first statement Stephano suggests using him as a gift: "If I can recover him, and keep him tame, and get to Naples with him, he's a present for any emperor that ever trod on neat's-leather" (2.2.69-71). In his second statement he is ready to sell Caliban: "If I can recover him, and keep him tame, I will not take too much for him; he shall pay for him that hath him and that soundly" (2.2.78-80). While Prospero and Miranda introduce Caliban to a new language that might broaden his capacities, Stephano enslaves his mind with alcohol. After he pours wine down Caliban's throat, Caliban declares: "These be fine things, an if they be not sprites. That's a brave god, and bears celestial liquor: I will kneel to him" (2.2.116-18). He then swears upon the "bottle" to be Stephano's "true subject" (2.2.125), repeatedly promising his allegiance: "I'll show thee every fertile inch o' th' island; and I will kiss thy foot: prithee, be my god;" "I'll kiss thy foot; I'll swear myself thy subject;" and finally:

> I'll show thee the best springs; I'll pluck thee berries;
> I'll fish for thee, and get thee wood enough.
> A plague upon the tyrant that I serve!
> I'll bear him no more sticks, but follow thee,
> Thou wondrous man.
> (2.2.160-4)

While Caliban sings joyfully of his new found freedom, the leader he would have for his kingdom increasingly proves that he is neither loyal nor sincere. As Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo approach Prospero to carry out the plot to kill him and usurp his government of the island, Stephano's words to Caliban, "Do you hear, monster? If I should take a displeasure against you, look you, --" indicate that Caliban should never have trusted him (4.1.201-2). Later Stephano threatens Caliban when he does not wish to help in the stealing of clothes from a line,

> Monster, lay-to your fingers: help to bear this away where my hogshead of wine is, or I'll turn you out of my kingdom: go to, carry this.
> (4.1.250-2)

Stephano's personal pleasures absorb him to the degree that even the usurpation of Prospero's kingdom is set aside; his "bottle" continually distracts him from his purpose, even when engaged in the most critical part of his task, the murder of Prospero. The clothes they find hanging on a line also distract Stephano and Trinculo; this suggests that their concerns in life are purely superficial and that their leadership of Caliban's kingdom would be oriented towards their own pleasures and mundane interests. And there will be much rapine under their government if Stephano's words come to be society's law -- he says as he encourages Trinculo's theft and helps himself to things that belong to others,

> I thank thee for that jest; here's a garment for't: wit shall not go unrewarded while I am King of this country. "Steal by line and level" is an excellent pass of pate; there's another garment for't.
> (4.1.241-4)

Not only will rapine be associated with their rule, but rape. We know from Prospero's words to him, "thou didst seek to violate / The honour of my child," and Caliban's response, "O ho, O ho! would't had been done! / Thou didst prevent me; I had peopled else / This isle with Calibans" (1.2.349-353), that Caliban has already attempted to rape Miranda. Stephano like Caliban does not envisage asking Miranda her consent to marry. When Caliban describes her beauty to Stephano and declares, "she will become thy bed, I warrant, / And bring forth brave brood" (3.2.102-103) Stephano replies with a violent plan:

> Monster, I will kill this man: his daughter and I will be king and queen, -- save our graces! -- and Trinculo and thyself shall be viceroys. . . .
> (3.2.104-6)

Hence part of the tyranny of Caliban's government is its policy of rape and forced marriage. Prospero's "law-oriented government" thus legitimizes itself by appealing to the stereotypical association of foreignness with rape and tyranny. At the end of the comedy, Caliban and Stephano apparently renounce their plans to take Prospero's power and Miranda's body. With a prayer to his god, Caliban thankfully, delightedly, and guiltily acknowledges his old master: "O Setebos, these be brave spirits indeed! / How fine my master is! I am afraid / He will chastise me" (1.5.261-3). Later he expresses regret for choosing Stephano as his leader: "What a thrice-double ass / Was I, to take this drunkard for a god, / And worship this dull fool!" (5.1.295-7). Caliban's conscious abandonment of his worship of Stephano and his return to Prospero implies that the latter is at least less of a tyrant in his eyes than the former. His restraint from further attempts on Miranda and his intention to "be wise hereafter" may similarly indicate a changed attitude to consent (5.1.294). At the end of the play Caliban is not only freed from the punishment executed upon him, Stephano, and Trinculo when they try to kill Prospero, but also from the misleading influence of Stephano. The punishments he undergoes at Prospero's hand lead him to a greater freedom than what he would have enjoyed under the dictators he himself chooses. All this, of course, does not from a modern viewpoint justify Prospero's enslavement of Caliban. Indeed, Caliban's reformation seems only to underline the stereotypical paradigm that establishes the need for the English to govern because only then can the non-English really be free from tyranny, the non-English being by virtue of their foreignness incapable of governing themselves with justice. However, this would seem to be peripheral to the main point of the play's discussion of different forms government, although there is no doubt that the imagery used in this discussion is ridden with the idea that whatever is foreign is inferior. From the standpoint of the inhabitants of the island, for example, Caliban's enslavement becomes desirable when he violates Miranda's rights and seeks to establish the tyranny of Stephano. Similarly, if the duties of a government are not only understood to be the safeguarding of rights but the development of their citizens' talents, then inhabitants like Ariel are also better off under Prospero than under Caliban. For the population, therefore, Caliban's enslavement is justified after he has shown he will violate their rights. This again might be seen as intended to justify colonialist oppression. While the metaphor is too obviously exact to be denied, this is not necessarily the reason for which it is employed. Even so, I do not think that Shakepeare is entirely idealizing Prospero's harsh treatment of Caliban. The rough language Prospero uses in addressing Caliban, and his angry words to Ariel, imply that his government has need of refinement. Gonzalo's, if ever it is established, will offer a gentler environment to everyone.

Gonzalo the Neapolitan is the second "foreigner" to propose a new form of government in *The Tempest*. However, nothing in Gonzalo's character or physical shape is shown to be foreign, as it is with Caliban. Perhaps he is a benign foreigner because he is not different. In accordance with his sameness and the humanist tradition that the character reflects the body, his character is good. It would follow then that the government he proposes must be benign. However, in some ways Gonzalo's utopian government and his companions' free love are similar in outcome to the government Caliban chooses and the kind of sexual freedom he tries to experience. A commonwealth such as Gonzalo envisages, which has neither trade nor ownership nor work, and in which "All things in common Nature should produce / Without sweat or endeavour," suggests that its citizens, like those under Stephano's law, would be able to take whatever they wished from anywhere without restriction or care about others' needs (2.1.144-8, 155-6).

Of his three companions, Sebastian, Alonso, and Antonio, it is Antonio who comments on the conditions of marriage under such a government. He answers Sebastian's query "No marrying 'mong his subjects?" mockingly, "None, man; all idle; whores and knaves" (2.1.161-2). The idea that all the women will be whores, or prostitutes, suggests a society which has organized its laws governing personal status chiefly around men's desires. However, Gonzalo then comments indirectly on

Antonio's remarks concerning free love, "I would with such perfection govern, sir, / T'excel the Golden Age" (2.1.163). Unlike a society of "whores and knaves," the "Golden Age" was constituted of perfect beings; as Gonzalo has already mentioned, the women would be "but innocent and pure" and all his people "innocent" (2.1.151, 160). In Gonzalo's utopia, then, perfection would be the law that reigned, though he says there should be "No sovereignty." His view is of an endless freedom possible when people are wholly innocent. Although Antonio talks only of the relationship between men and women, his few words smack of an anarchy in which the weak would be "contained" by the strong -- the equivalent of tyranny.[28]

I believe the distinctions drawn here between these men's views on marriage correlate with the foreignness of their politics to Prospero's. Shakespeare and his audience were probably familiar with several sorts of utopias.[29] The idea of a golden age in which people lived in complete harmony with nature and in complete equality with each other had been current in England at least from medieval times and in Europe for centuries from at least the eras of the Greeks and Romans.[30] Calvin's conception of the ideal state as one ruled by God and solely "in accord with the law of God as expressed in the Scriptures"[31] would also have been familiar to many English Protestants. While his Geneva government had in some respects the appearance of a tyranny, according to his philosophy "resistance to it [tyranny] was justified on grounds of religion."[32] Thomas More's *Utopia,* meaning literally "nowhere" and named for the island upon which his ideal society was established,[33] had been published in its original Latin since 1516; its translation into English by Robinson had been circulating since 1556. In More's Utopia celibacy was discouraged, but marriage was monogamous and organized in a patriarchal order, with "the eldest father ruling the 'family' with his wife's help, all women giving obedience and service to their husbands."[34] However, as regards choice of partner men and women were equal in their rights.[35]

We do not know if this is the type of consent Gonzalo was thinking of when he answered Sebastian and Antonio's discussion about marriage with a reference to perfection and the golden age. Other utopian systems "available" in Elizabethan culture represent marriage and consent in various ways. Plato's Eutopia (meaning "good state") prescribes a system quite different from that hinted at by Sebastian and Antonio: "The wives of these guardians [governors of the state] are to be in common, and their children are also common, and no parent is to know his own child, nor any child his parent."[36] Plato's view was also that sexual consent be regulated by genetic concerns, in order that the "best" propagate most. Thus his idea of free love was distinct from Sebastian's and even more from the nineteenth-century idea of free love which looked forward to a society where men and women were equal: "When women are no longer owned," wrote one male proponent of free love in 1868, "when men are no longer slaveholders . . . then . . . will men be manly, and just, and women be recognized and treated as equals."[37] This latter image of free women with multiple husbands was available to the Elizabethan mindset in such Chaucerian figures as the Wife of Bath, although constrained by the fact that in her case it had to be one husband at a time.

While Montaigne's *Des Cannibales* has not so frequently been remembered for its utopian images as have the works of More and Plato, it has been cited (along with Isaiah) as the source for Shakespeare's delineation of Gonzalo's ideal commonwealth.[38] The society described by Montaigne in this essay (published in 1580), a community that inhabits the large fertile island of "Athlantide" (which was located in the Straits of Gibraltar not too far away from Tunis where Alonso and his companions have just attended Claribel's wedding), has many of the same characteristics as Gonzalo's ideal government.[39] Indeed, the following parts of Gonzalo's speech are almost a word-for-word translation from Montaigne:

> . . . for no kind of traffic
> Would I admit; no name of magistrate;
> Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,
> And use of service, none; contract, succession,

> Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;
> No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;
> No occupation; all men idle, all. . .
> (2.1.144-50)

Shakespeare has kept the precise order of Montaigne in his list of utopian features,[40] but he has removed three from the list: "nul nom de . . . superiorité politique . . . nul respect de parenté que commun; nuls vestemens" -- in English: "no name of political superiority . . . no respect for family other than a communal respect, no clothes." It seems reasonable to suppose, given the close correspondence between Montaigne's words in *Des Cannibales* and Gonzalo's words in this speech, that these parts were intentionally not included by Shakespeare. Even though Gonzalo is mocked by Sebastian and Antonio and ignored by Alonso, he is favoured by the hero of the comedy Prospero. In Gonzalo Shakespeare delineates a most sympathetic character: Named by Prospero "O good Gonzalo, / My true preserver," "A noble Neapolitan", he stands up to Antonio's tyranny by supplying Prospero and Miranda with "Rich garments, linens, stuffs and necessaries" (5.1.68-69, 1.2.161, 164); advises merriness in woe, and sees the salt-water as giving advantage to his clothes and the clothes of his ship-wrecked companions (2.1.1-3, 59-63). Nowhere is his Neapolitan nationality considered alien. It would seem likely then that he would not be constructed to convey any message that was directly in opposition to *The Tempest*'s general thrust. If the play promotes respect for parents in its discussion of marital consent and privileges the politics of certain characters, we might expect features that go against *The Tempest*'s project to be omitted from the speech of one of the play's protagonists. For instance, the idea that no one would be considered superior because of his politics -- implied in the words "no name of political superiority" -- would be inconsistent with the trend in the play to promote the politics of one person (Prospero's). Having no respect for family except in a communal sense similarly runs counter to trends in the play, especially those concerning the obedience Miranda and Ferdinand are expected to show to Prospero and the consent for their marriage offered by both fathers.[41] As regards the nakedness recommended by Montaigne, in Elizabethan England clothes were the index of class and politics;[42] hence the omission of this characteristic might have been necessary in order to side-step these unwonted connotations, as well as the religious doctrines of the time. The idea that one's own family was not entitled to any special respect suggests that marriage in Montaigne's ideal nation did not depend upon parental consent. This and other aspects of marriage described by Montaigne went against the ideals of feminine liberty, of monogamy, and of free male and female consent accompanied by paternal consent, so far at least as these values were embraced in Shakespeare's play and by much of his audience. In the communal family described by Montaigne "those of the same age call themselves brothers; those who are under, children; and the old men are fathers to all the others;"[43] hence no particular father would receive particular respect from his child. The precedence given to men in this passage continues in the description of marriage:

> The men there have many wives, and the more they have reputation for bravery the more wives they have: A remarkable beauty in their marriages is that the same jealousy that our wives have to prevent our friendship with other women their wives have in order that their husbands acquire women.[44]

Montaigne also writes of his cannibals that "the wives sleep separate from the husbands, and that " the wisdom of the old and the priests entails only two recommendations, "bravery against enemies and amity with their wives."[45] If these were the conditions of consent and marriage that Gonzalo was referring to, he did well to enclose them neatly under the title of "perfection." While the idea of polygamy might have pleased some of the men in the audience, it would not have pleased the women. (The idea of sleeping separately might have pleased the heavy eaters of the audience.) In explaining his vision, Gonzalo does not, for all his ambivalence about the matter of female and male consent, contradict Antonio's mocking surmise that all will be "whores and knaves." This government that apparently condones free love is, however, undermined by Gonzalo and his companions in other ways. Sebastian's and Antonio's mockery and Gonzalo's playfulness imply that the utopia described is not being seriously put forward. The part of Gonzalo's system, however, that is most undermined is that concerning free love, because he never articulates his views nor comments on Sebastian's and Antonio's views.

But the idea of marital consent of the person who most opposes Gonzalo's system are undermined to a greater extent. Alonso, the only king amongst Gonzalo's audience as he playfully expatiates on his perfect government, does not like what is said. When Antonio and Sebastian shout "'Save his Majesty!" "Long live Gonzalo," and Gonzalo asks him, "And, -- do you mark me, sir?" he answers, "Prithee, no more: thou dost talk nothing to me" (2.1.164-6). Alonso's views on marital consent have already been hinted at. When he wonders whether he should have married his daughter Claribel to the King of Tunis -- "an African," Sebastian comments to him about this marriage, "You were kneel'd to, and importun'd otherwise, / By all of us; and the fair soul herself / Weigh'd between loathness and obedience, at / Which end o' th' beam should bow" (2.1.124-7). That Claribel had to choose between "loathness and obedience" implies that she did not wish to marry the King of Tunis but did so only to comply with the desire of her father. Malcolm Pittock's statement that in medieval times "Dido was held up as a paragon of widowhood" because "She committed suicide not because of Aeneas' desertion but because she was determined to avoid a second marriage and remain faithful to her first husband"[46] may have implications for Claribel's marital situation. In his reply to Adrian's comment on Claribel's virtue that "Tunis was never grac'd before with such a paragon to their Queen," Gonzalo compares her to Dido -- "Not since widow Dido's time" (2.1.71-3). Is Gonzalo suggesting that her forced marriage has made her a widow, or simply that in submitting to her father's will she has destroyed all possibility of marriage to another? Her marriage to someone she does not care for effectively does both: Her marriage is like widowhood because it has been carried out without her sincere consent and is void of love, and so effectively deprives her of a husband. At the same time, it has made her unavailable for any other marriage that she might choose herself -- hence she is like Dido but unlike other widows (who might follow the Wife of Bath's practice). While Gonzalo's remark is ridiculed by his friends, it is a poignant argument against forced marriages if read in this manner. Alonso now sees Claribel's marriage as a punishment for himself, because he has also lost his son (or believes he has) and therefore has no close relative to succeed him. His past actions in regard to his daughter are thus consistent with the tyranny he exercised against Prospero, and contrary to Gonzalo's idyllic system. His position in the play, however, is a difficult one: He has acted as a tyrant both with regard to his government and with regard to his daughter but must be reconciled with Prospero and with his son, both of whom display an attachment to order and justice. While there is a reconciliation, Alonso's restitution is only partial: His grief over his marrying his daughter to the King of Tunis is motivated by his personal and political interests rather than because she has been forced to marry against her liking or because of his remorse for his transgression of the principle of free consent; as soon as he discovers that his son is still alive and can fulfill both the personal need to have a child who lives nearby and the political function of being his successor, his grief over Claribel's marriage disappears. He therefore never attains the idealism of Gonzalo or Prospero's devotion to justice, nor does he share in their attitudes to consent.

How do *The Tempest'* s representations of Gonzalo's utopian government and the various tyrannies relate to the idea raised at several points that Prospero's government is a tyranny? Gonzalo's ideal system is the only government that offers absolute freedom, but it is dependent upon perfection. Presumably, it could not contain a Caliban who was lecherous and still free, if all its women are innocent and pure. This establishes the principle that, as long as human beings are not perfect, a just government and a free society can only exist in relative terms. Hence, it promotes the argument that the best government is the one that is least tyrannical and provides the greatest freedom and benefit to the greatest number of people. If Prospero's justice appears severe, it is shown to be a necessary discipline that saves its subjects from tyranny. Alonso, for example, is punished by being shipwrecked and by the apparent loss of his son, all of which situations are effected by Prospero. But where Prospero's "tyranny" has salutary results -- Alonso is made to feel remorse about his injustice towards Prospero and Miranda and about his forcing his daughter to marry against her will -- the other tyranny exerted against Alonso -- by Sebastian who with Antonio plots to take his life in order to usurp his throne -- will only feed Sebastian's thirst for power and increase the tyranny in Naples. Similarly, Antonio's tyranny benefitted himself but imposed greater burdens on the people of Milan.

As for Caliban, it appears that Prospero did not at first treat him as a slave, because he says that he "us'd" him "with human care" and "lodg'd" him in his own "cell" (1.2.347-9). However, throughout the remaining discourse of the play, Prospero does treat Caliban as a slave and a criminal. Even given that the curtailment of his rights is necessary for the safeguarding of the freedom of the generality of the population, his situation is still hard for the modern audience to condone. There are other ways of interpreting this action that may help us to see that Shakespeare makes Prospero a hero for reasons other than his exemplification of the supposedly benign imperialist exploitation and oppression. In Stephen Orgel's psychoanalytic study, Caliban "is an aspect of Antonio, the evil child, the usurping brother" and the play itself "a collaborative fantasy," more relevant to the human psyche than to political philosophy.[47] If Caliban represents an aspect of every human being -- every person's earth-bound physical nature, for example -- then Prospero's enslaving of him for the purposes of the fuller and easier functioning of other human capacities (represented by other characters in the play) would not be so easy for the modern reader to dismiss as tyranny.[48] If the play is partly an exploration of the ideas of utopia current in

Shakespeare's day, then this latter interpretation is quite plausible; one of the philosophical issues of these ideas is the reconciliation of freedom and order to find a moderate state in which all a person's needs, duties and desires can be balanced. A consideration of the social context in which the play was written facilitates still another interpretation. If Caliban is taken to represent a person rather than an aspect of the psyche or an everyman's trait, then the practice of punishing him with slavery, whether or not he has the features of an "alien," would not have been entirely disdained in an Elizabethan context. In one period of Elizabeth's rule as a punishment for all "able-bodied vagrants" a law was passed instituting a two-year slavery that allowed the use of chains, branding and whips.[49] There is no doubt, however, that his different race would have made his enslavement more likely. This would especially be true if he had the appearance of a gypsy, because the Elizabethan law enacted in 1562, which condemned to death and confiscation of lands and goods not only "Egyptians" but "any company of vagabonds . . . counterfeiting, transforming or disguising themselves by their Apparel, Speech or other Behaviour, like unto Egyptians," is clearly racist.[50] While by today's standards such a practice is utterly abhorrent, the enslavement of the indigenous peoples of the New World, not to mention those of Africa, on the grounds of their religious difference was another common and accepted practice.[51] Finally, Caliban's attempt at rape would, if he had been an inhabitant of England, have made him subject to punishment by death, as mentioned in Elizabeth's statute 18. Within such a context, Prospero's enslavement of him might be interpreted as unexpectedly mild, especially in view of his final freeing of him. With all the others freed too, Prospero's government must be seen as relatively just and as having for its purpose the education and ordering of society.[52]

Once that order and education have been established to a sufficient degree, he lets go his authority. A. Lynne Magnusson in her article "Interruption in *The Tempest*" discusses the interruptions that occur in the play's plot, in the character's plans and actions, and in a number of speeches.[53] Forethought about interruption or lack thereof in the various visions of government described in *The Tempest* is perhaps relevant to the theme of politics and their relation to marital consent. In their design of a totalitarian government, the nearest Caliban and his companions come to envisaging an interruption is when Trinculo says, "Servant-monster! the folly of this island! They say there's but five upon this isle: We are three of them; if th' other two be brain'd like us, the state totters" (3.2.4-6). Similarly, in the utopian vision presented by Gonzalo and mocked by his companions no mention is made of an interruption to Gonzalo's governance, or what should be done in case of such interruption. Prospero is the only one of the three designers of governments who has foreseen and prepared for the interruption of his rule.[54] He has spent years educating his daughter (1.2.172-4), he has changed his enemies to friends and supporters of his policies, and he has orchestrated a marriage of two ideal youths who are capable of carrying on a sort of politics, possibly superior to his own. Indeed, in their brief conversation over chess, Miranda and Ferdinand presage a governance characterized by attitudes opposite to Antonio and Alonso's greed:

> *Mir.* Sweet lord, you play me false.
> *Fer.* No, my dearest love,
> I would not for the world.
> *Mir.* Yes, for a score of kingdoms you should wrangle,
> And I would call it fair play.
> (5.1.171-5)

With a mate whose trustworthiness defies "the world," Miranda's forgiveness may extend even over "a score of kingdoms." Their conversation suggests that Miranda and Ferdinand give precedence to the principles of trustworthiness, love, and mercy over the gain of land and power. Letting go the instruments of his power and leading those who will renew policies based on trust in a land cleansed of tyranny, Prospero directs his thoughts to his "retirement" and to his "grave" (5.1.310-11), his abdication of his magical powers a final proof that his government was not a tyranny. Stephen Orgel argues that these thoughts "can be seen as a final assertion of authority and control" because with the marriage of Miranda to Ferdinand his dukedom will go to the King of Naples and "his death will remove Antonio's last link with the ducal power."[55] Precluding a government by a consultative council, a kind of rulership that has not been presented anywhere in the play, Prospero's "control" here is still farther from tyranny than the "control" sought by the other rulers or would-be rulers in the play. Ferdinand has displayed his good character -- his respect for the rights of others and his willingness to abdicate control when justice and love so demand. In passing power to him rather than to his blood relative Antonio, whose past has shown him to be greedy, tyrannical and murderous, Prospero displays his justice, his care for his people and his freedom from family favouritism. This may be an assertion of authority and control, as Orgel argues, but this assertion is preferable to its absence, which would only allow the continuation of Antonio's tyranny.

The sort of marital consent associated with this government also distinguishes it from the other governments set forth in the play. We get a grasp of Prospero's idea of male and female consent by looking at his punishment of Caliban and the courtship and marriage of Ferdinand and Miranda. Caliban's punishment suggests that Prospero believes a woman must have free consent, though his designation of Miranda as "my daughter" in his accusation of Caliban -- "till thou didst seek to / Violate the honour of my daughter" -- may imply that he feels that Caliban's action was also directed against his fatherly rights. While Prospero protects her right to free consent by controlling Caliban, his desire to control his daughter's marriage is restrained in that he does not make evident to her that if she chooses Ferdinand it will please him and serve his own political interest. Setting aside the interpretations that pay attention to Prospero's role as theatrical director of all the actions in the play or playwright of its scenes, Prospero's care to not give an opinion about Ferdinand before Miranda sees him and his pretended opposition to their marriage afterwards suggests that he very much wants both parties to be sincere in the consents they offer one another. In a sense Prospero's actions also enable Miranda to separate the question of consent from politics. When Miranda first sees Ferdinand, she exclaims, "What is't? a spirit? / Lord, how it looks about! Believe me, sir, / It carries a brave form. But 'tis a spirit" (1.2.412-14). She is attracted to Ferdinand by his "divine" and "noble" shape, without knowing his class, race, religion, nationality, or his political position. Even when Prospero tells her that Ferdinand is "an impostor," adding, "To th' most of men this is a Caliban, / And they to him are angels" (1.2.480, 483-4), she remains unmoved. Her response, "My affections / Are then most humble; I have no ambition / To see a goodlier man" (1.2.484-6), demonstrate her freedom from any class, racial, or political prejudice that would keep her from giving her affection to someone for reasons of identity rather than character. Though Prospero then calls her to obedience (1.2.486), Miranda transgresses his will several times as she develops her friendship with Ferdinand and renews her consent to him. Her answer to Ferdinand when he asks her name indicates that Prospero has forbade her to tell him -- she says, "Miranda. O my father, / I have broken your hest to say so" (3.1.36-37). Moreover, upon Ferdinand's expression of his affection to her Miranda responds,

> . . .but, by my modesty,
> The jewel in my dower, I would not wish
> Any companion in the world but you;
> Nor can imagination form a shape,
> Besides yourself, to like of. But I prattle
> Something too wildly, and my father's precepts
> I therein do forget.
> (3.1.54-58)

That she follows her expression of full consent with a statement indicating that this action is against her father suggests that the play is privileging the idea that precedence should be given to the consent between the partners to the marriage. Miranda's appeal to her modesty suggests that her consent is an exclusive sort, distinct from that of the free love alluded to in the discussion of Gonzalo and his companions. That Prospero never punishes Miranda for her turning aside from his expressed wish and for following her own inclinations in the choice of a marriage partner shows that for him paternal consent is secondary. However, in a later conversation with Ferdinand Prospero confirms and approves the contract that he and Miranda have made, thus conveying the idea that paternal consent should at least be given token attention. Ferdinand apologizes to his own father for not asking his consent: "I chose her when I could not ask my father / For his advice, nor thought I had one" (5.1.190-1), thus likewise acknowledging a patriarchal role in marital consent. Prospero's function within the new family and in Ferdinand's life is possibly a further argument for paternal consent. So Ferdinand's words to his father suggest:

> . . . She
> Is daughter to this famous Duke of Milan,
> Of whom so often I have heard renown,
> But never saw before; of whom I have
> Receiv'd a second life; and second father
> This lady makes him to me.
> (5.1.191-6)

With Alonso's reply "I am hers," the families of Miranda and Ferdinand are cemented into a larger union, paving the way for the political reconciliation that follows (5.1.197).

While Prospero's regaining his dukedom is part of this reconciliation, much of the action during the engagement process implies that in this play marital consent is valued over politics. After Miranda has offered her consent, Ferdinand mentions his political position as King and explains his willingness to give up this position (which of course would entail his giving up of class status as well as political power) in order to obtain her love (3.1.60-67, 71-73). Miranda's detachment from class position and political power is even more generous -- she is willing to live in celibacy:

> I am your wife if you will marry me;
> If not, I'll die your maid: to be your fellow
> You may deny me; but I'll be your servant,
> Whether you will or no.
> (3.1.83-86)

As Ferdinand has verified her consent, so does she his, saying, "My husband, then?" His answer again emphasizes his willingness to abandon his political power, if his consent to marry her should so necessitate: "Ay, with a heart as willing / As bondage e'er of freedom: here's my hand" (3.1.88-89). The contract is thus sealed with a hand clasp between the two partners to the marriage rather than between the two fathers and for reasons of mutual affection rather than of politics. All the ideal features associated with Ferdinand and Miranda up to this agreement therefore point to a representation of consent that is free from political constraints.

This idea is further supported by the play's treatment of male consent and the relative participation by Caliban and Ferdinand in a process that will allow them to express their consent. Except for the idea that his consent is dependent upon female consent, Caliban's rights to consent are not directly addressed in the play. It would appear that in fact he never gives himself a chance to verbalize his consent, although like Ferdinand he has shown a desire to marry, or at least a desire to mate and bring forth progeny -- what in early times was considered equivalent to wanting marriage. A large part of Caliban's problem is that he and Miranda do not speak to one another.[56] Ferdinand by contrast is unusually articulate and has an appreciation of language, at least of his own language.[57] His first words after hearing Miranda speak, "My language! heavens! / I am the best of them that speak this speech, / Were I but where 'tis spoken" (1.2.431-3), show his regard for his language and his ability to speak. While female consent has often been defined as silence, there is an emphasis in *The Tempest* on female language. Ferdinand's frank and clear demand for Miranda's hand implies that one condition of their marriage will be her willingness: "O, if a virgin, / And your affection not gone forth, I'll make you / The Queen of Naples" (1.2.450-2). The result of her giving consent will be a political action -- she will be co-ruler of Naples. After giving her consent Miranda has verified that Ferdinand has given his to be her husband. For Caliban, this chance cannot be offered because no verbal agreement is sought by him before his action, and without this, his advances on Miranda cannot have the political results he envisages. If he succeeded in his desires the whole island would have been populated by his people. That his failure to speak preempts the possibility of his giving consent himself and results in the loss of his potential domination of the land shows that the idea of consent has much broader implications than are at first glance evident. Just as Prospero's preparation for the interruption of his rule demands that he imagine the future government of his domain, so the verbalization entailed in the process of consent demands that the couple imagine their future together. While this is perhaps only a small nuance in the play's overall representation of consent, it implies an added significance to the theme of freedom and consent that runs through Shakespeare's plays.

Ferdinand and Caliban are also distinguished by the importance they place on the consent of the other sex. We have just seen that Caliban gives precedence to his own production of a population for his island over the consent of his partner to mate and bear these children. Similarly, in his plan for Stephano to take Miranda as wife Caliban gives precedence to the political rule of his island because he never considers the question of her consent. Ferdinand, however, makes his gain of a co-ruler dependent upon her consent to marriage. Ferdinand is even ready to give up his political power if his marriage to Miranda should require it. These differences between Caliban's and Ferdinand's attitudes to consent are in some ways connected to their distinctive responses to Prospero's governance. Where Caliban is rebellious and self-willed towards Prospero's governance, and violent in his attitude to sex, Ferdinand is obedient to the government in power, subject to the desires of others,[58] and gentle and restrained in his attitude to sex. Where Caliban tries to evade the work Prospero gives him, Ferdinand carries his logs with utmost willingness. Where Caliban tries to rape Miranda, Ferdinand restrains himself in order to submit to Prospero's request that they wait until "All sanctimonious ceremonies may / With full and holy rite be minister'd"

(4.1.16-17). Caliban as the most foreign of the two is thus presented as both rebel and rapist, opposer of just government and of a marital consent that is unlimited for reasons of class or politics.

The privileging of marital consent over political concerns does not, however, diminish the political effects of that consent. In this regard *The Tempest* concurs in its grand outline with its newly discovered main source, the anonymous Spanish romance *Primaleon Prince of Greece,* which was first translated into English in the 1590's.[59] The Prospero figure in this story, called the Knight of the Enclosed Isle, protects enemies that fight at sea with his magical powers and succeeds in making peace between them. They in turn help to reconcile him with the Knight of Ordan by arranging (at his request) the marriage of his daughter with one of Ordan's sons. As a result of this marriage, the Knight of the Enclosed Isle regains his right to patrimony on the Isle of Ordan which had been unlawfully taken from him by the Knight of Ordan. While in this broad movement *Primaleon* corresponds to *The Tempest,* the two works appear to differ in the emphasis they place on paternal consent and paternal intervention in marriage. In *Primaleon* , for example, the Knight of the Enclosed Isle himself instigates the arrangement of the marriage of his daughter with the son of his enemy, and for a purely political motive. Moreover, when the Knight of the Enclosed Isle is performing his role as peacemaker, one of his tasks is to obtain the Emperor of Constantinople's forgiveness for the young man who has married his daughter without his permission.[60] While *Primaleon*'s Knight of the Enclosed Isle corresponds in so many ways with *The Tempest*'s Prospero (even in his addiction to books), his attitudes to marital consent seem to differ significantly from those of Shakespeare's magician. Without a careful reading of this lengthy novel it is not possible to analyse all the changes Shakespeare made that might give evidence of an intentional representation of marital consent and its relation to politics, but the few touched on here suggest that in contrast to its source *The Tempest* privileges female and male consent above both political position and paternal consent.

In my reading of *The Tempest* I have addressed the play's apparent promulgation of oppression, only as it pertains to the relationship between marital consent and government.[61] I have tried to demonstrate that from the standpoint of the population subject to governance and within the social context of the play's composition, Prospero's governance of Caliban was gentle. Indeed, in the context of Elizabethan law the play could be seen as promoting resistance to the social violence and tyranny current at the time. I am aware that there are many issues concerning race, class, and religion in the play that relate to Caliban and which I cannot encompass within the small scope of this paper. Caliban's physical difference that includes Keltic features and animal-like members and derives from Africa and the devil, his status as slave, and his faith in Setebos make it appear that Prospero's discipline of him and Miranda's choice not to encourage his advances are because of their racist, classist, and religious prejudices. Nor can the recent discovery of a correspondence for Caliban in the enchanted Maiortes of the *Primaleon*, which has persuaded Gary Schmidgall to see him as "an avatar of all human beings subject to Circean deformation,"[62] remove the evidence that the difference in politics that keeps Caliban from Miranda is as much entangled with these other differences as it is with Caliban's attitude to consent. Nevertheless, in a number of ways *The Tempest* bends away from the racialist, politically narrow, father-oriented society in which it was written. Prospero's identification of Ferdinand with Caliban and Miranda's uninterest in the political status of her husband offer to the audience the view that the best consents for marriage are made without regard to political implications. Miranda's continuing respect for Ferdinand despite his slave-like position in relation to her father again suggests that Caliban's position as slave is not the reason for Miranda's rejection of him. The accusation that Prospero represents an imperialist oppressor and that by making him the hero of *The Tempest* Shakespeare is complicit in promoting this oppression does not stand up when we look at how much of the drama is concerned with tyranny. If Caliban is seen as a colonized victim of imperialist oppression, then his oppressor is Stephano not Prospero. Given that absolute freedom is available only under Gonzalo's utopian government and that a prerequisite for that government is perfection, the limited freedom enjoyed under Prospero's rule is the best that can be obtained in a society composed of individuals who are selfish enough to impinge on the rights of others.

However, I have shown that foreignness has been used in the play as an index of attitudes to marital consent which are not favoured. Caliban as the most foreign character in *The Tempest* advocates the most restrictive sort of consent, at least of female consent. Alonso, the Neopolitan king, and his subjects Trinculo, Stephano, and Sebastian have similarly narrow ideas concerning marital consent, especially as it pertains to women. However, Gonzalo and Ferdinand, though also Neopolitans, seem to value free marital consent in the manner that Prospero does. It must be noted, however, that in Gonzalo's case his foreignness is not given attention and Ferdinand's is only occasionally referred to by Prospero, whereas Caliban's alien status is alluded to numerous times. But despite the liaison of restricted consent with foreignness, *The Tempest* in many ways promotes a sort of consent that is free from political, class, and paternal constraints. Prospero's restraint in giving his opinion to Miranda about Ferdinand and the lack of reprimand that either one of the partners to the marriage receives for failure to request paternal consent support the idea that the free consent of the partners should be preeminent over any other consent. The punishment of Caliban for his attempt to override Miranda's will and the critical remarks made by Gonzalo concerning Alonso's forcing his daughter's marriage give further weight to this argument, especially as it concerns women. The relatively greater value placed on consent by the proponents of law-oriented or ideal governments (Prospero, Miranda, Gonzalo and Ferdinand) contrasts with the lack of concern for this right expressed by those who give in to tyranny (Alonso, Antonio, Sebastian, Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban). All these movements combine to form a complex image, in which the figures of Ferdinand and Miranda standing in for free male and female consent are silhouetted against the shadowy form of Prospero -- a symbol for law-based government, while Gonzalo -- a moonlike shape above -- attracts their attention to remind them of the utopian freedom for which they strive as they perfect themselves and their government. All of these are buoyed up from under by the speckled Caliban, whose accented foreignness has supplied the platform for their fine display. The other characters associated with forced marriage and tyranny are still there, but in the background as the subdued, round-backed waves of a sea settling after a storm.

Notes

[1] William Shakespeare, *The Tempest,* ed. Frank Kermode (Arden) (London and New York: Routledge, 1989; first published in 1958) 3.3.22-24. All following quotations are taken from this edition.

[2] The close liaison of Caliban's features and characteristics with Elizabethan stereotypical images of Scottish people, while it still establishes that prejudice against foreigners is an agent in the play's construction, suggests that in the imperialist / colonized paradigm the colonized can easily take the place of the imperialist -- the Scottish people were later to collaborate with the English in the expansion of the Empire and its oppressive strategies.

[3] Venetians writing of the Scottish in the fifteenth and sixteenth century following visits to England appear to have obtained their information from the English. Ambassadors from Venice, Andre Trevisan (1497-98) and Giacomo Soranzo (1551-54) "remark that the poverty of Scotland makes its people more keen to invade wealthy England than the English are to invade them; moreover, they prefer brigandage to work! . . . Two languages are spoken, one by the 'wild people', the other by the more civilised. . . . Salmon fishing in the 'Twedo' is mentioned, and the 'incredible' number and variety of fish, and 'incredible' size of whales and sea-monsters, to be seen in Scotland." Soranzo reports that the English "are more afraid of the Scots than of the French" (Emma Gurney Salter, *Tudor England through Venetian Eyes* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1930) 75-76, 114).

[4] See Gordon Williams, "A Sample of Elizabethan Sexual Periphrasis," *Trivium* (May 1968) vol. 3: 94-100, for an explanation of the liaison between fish imagery and hypersexuality.

[5] Caliban has other features commonly attributed to foreigners, such as laziness, inferior intelligence and drunkenness. Karl-Heinz Stoll in "Caliban's Caribbean

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Career" says that "Caliban can be seen as a *mixtum compositum* of the inhabitants of areas which became European colonies"; he does not, however, take note of Caliban's Scottish / Irish features that is, his freckles and his rebelliousness (*Komparatistische-Hefte* (1984) 9: 7-21).

[6] Michel de Montaigne, *Des Cannibales,* in *Montaigne: Selected Essays,* ed. Arthur Tilley and A. M. Boase, 2nd ed. (Manchester University Press, 1948) 32.

[7] Not only were laws passed to limit the number of aristocratic families settling in London, but King James gave addresses concerning the harmfulness, especially for women, of being in close contact with the foreign things and practices so prevalent in London. See Leonard Tennenhouse, "Family Rites: City Comedy and the Strategies of Patriarchalism," in *New Historicism and Renaissance Drama,* ed. and introd. Richard Wilson and Richard Dutton (London and New York: Longman Critical Readers, 1992) 201. 195-206.

[8] Yoshiko Kawachi, *Calendar of English Renaissance Drama: 1558-1642* (New York and London: Garland, 1986) 152-3, 159.

[9] This account refers to his visit to London in 1592. From William Rye, *England as seen by foreigners in the Days of Elizabeth and James* I (1967) 7-8, qtd. in Richard Salter, *Documents and Debates: Elizabeth I and her Reign* (London: Macmillan Education, 1988) 66.

[10] 20 August 1587, Paris, M. B. to the Queen, from *Calendar of the MSS of the Marquis of Salisbury,* vol. XIV, Addenda, 345-6, qtd. in Salter, 118.

[11] Goldberg, David Theo, ed. *Anatomy of Racism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990) 306.

[12] *The Lavves Resolvtions of Womens Rights* (London: John More, 1632) Lib. V, Sect. XXI.

[13] Lib. V, Sect. XXXVIII.

[14] Edward Westermarck, Edward, *The History of Human Marriage,* vol. 2, 5th ed. (1921) 338-9.

[15] One ancient English law dictated that if the man "were a horseman, his horse lost his tail and mane. . . . His hawk likewise lost her beak, talons, and train." At certain times the man might be forgiven his crime should the woman demand him as husband. From *The Law's Resolutions,* Book v, sec. xxii, qtd. in Klein, 56.

[16] It is named "so damnable a crime" in *The Lavves Resolutions* (Lib. V, Sect. XXXVIII).

[17] From *The Lavves Resolutions,* Lib. V, Sect. XXXVIII.

[18] In George Peele's *Alphonsus Emperor of Germany* (1594) the English, though victorious in the end, lose the battle because of Spanish tyranny. A. J. Hoenselaars,

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Images of Englishmen and Foreigners in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries: A Study of Stage Characters and National Identity in English Renaissance Drama, 1558-1642 (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1992) 84. See also Raphael Holinshed, *Holinshed's Chronicle as used in Shakespeare's Plays,* ed. Allardyce and Josephine Nicoll (London: Dent; New York" Dutton, 1963).

[19] George, Archbishop of Canterbury, *A Brief Description of the whole World, Wherein is particularly described all the Monachies, Empires, and Kingdomes of the same* . . . (London: T. H., 1636) 65 (STC 23867).

[20] "Introduction: Placing Women in the English Renaissance," ed. Betty S. Travitsky and Anne M. Haselkorn, *The Englishwoman in Print: Counterbalancing the Canon* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990) 14-15.

[21] When the victim was a married woman, it might make her "unavailable" to her own husband, particularly if she was not able to prove her honesty and was convicted of adultery. In one 1581 case Cicely Lee of Edgefield was accused of living with the man (of the gentry class) who had raped her (ANW/2/15, 1581, Edgefield con Cicely ux. James Lee, cited in Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988) 100.

[22] Hoenselaars, 50.

[23] Hoenselaars, 35-36.

[24] Hoenselaars, 17. For a more extensive discussion of the English view of Spaniards at this time, Hoenselaars suggests William S. Maltby, *The Black Legend in England: The Development of Anti-Spanish Sentiment, 1558-1666* (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1971).

[25] Hoenselaars, 46-47, 186-7.

[26] Trinculo describes him: "Legged like a man! and his fins like arms!" (2.2.34-35); Prospero calls him "a bastard one" (5.1.273).

[27] Brian Vickers, *Appropriating Shakespeare: Contemporary Critical Quarrels* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993) 246.

[28] Northrop Frye characterizes utopias in general as appearing to have "all the evils that we call totalitarian." Among these evils, however, he includes many that are not necessarily part of Gonzalo's vision: the "unscrupulous use of lies for propaganda, . . . ruthlessly censored art, . . . subordination of all creative and productive life of the state to a fanatical military caste." ("Varieties of Literary Utopias," *Utopias and Utopian Thought,* ed. Frank E. Manuel (Boston: Houghton Mifflin; Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1966) 33.)

[29] As with the Romantic era and the nineteenth century, there were a number of utopian visions put in print in the Renaissance, among those not mentioned in my discussion here: *Christianopolis* by Johann Valentin Andreae (1586-1654), *The New Atlantis* by Francis Bacon (1561-1626), *The City of the Sun* by Tomasso Campanella (1568-

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1639), and Samuel Gott's *Nova Solyma* (London: 1648). (Lewis Mumford, *The Story of Utopias* (Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, 1959) 312.)

[30] Warren Stevenson in his introduction to *The Myth of the Golden Age in English Romantic Poetry* comments that "The ancient Greeks with their garden of Hesperides and the Jewish Garden of Eden constitute the twin fountainheads which have helped to keep alive the tradition of the Golden Age in Western culture." He also notes that there are "variants" of this myth "in Hindu, Persian, Chinese, Slavonic, Celtic and North American Indian mythology" ((Salzburg, Austria: Intitut für Anglistik un Americanistik, Universität Salzburg, 1981) 3).

[31] J. W. Allen, *A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Methuen, 1928) 65.

[32] Maurice Latey, *Tyranny: A Study in the Abuse of Power* (London: Macmillan, 1969) 199.

[33] Russell Ames, *Citizen Thomas More and His Utopia* (Princeton University Press, 1949) 4.

[34] *Utopia*, 54 ctd. in Ames, 174. It should be noted, however, that despite the subordination of women produced by the peasant economic modes of More's Utopia, women "participate in public life," "study, enter the priesthood, go to war, work at the trades" (174).

[35] Ames, 174.

[36] *The Republic,* trans. Benjamin Jowett, qtd. in Mumford, 47.

[37] John C. Spurlock, *Free Love: Marriage and Middle-Class Radicalism in America, 1825-1860* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1988) 209.

[38] See footnote to 143 ff. (1989 Arden edition). Frequent comparisons have been made between Shakespeare and Montaigne. One early example is John M. Robertson's *Montaigne and Shakespeare* (New York: Haskell House, 1968; first published 1897).

[39] Montaigne writes, "Là est tousjours la parfaicte religion, la parfaicte police, perfect et accomply usage de toutes choses. . . . En ceux là sont vives et vigoureuses les vrayes, et plus utiles et naturelles vertus et proprietez . . . il n'y a aucune espece de trafique; nulle cognoissance de lettres; nulle science de nombres; nul nom de magistrat, my de superiorité politique; nul usage de service, de richesse ou de pauvreté; nuls contrats; nulles successions; nuls partages; nulles occupations qu'oysives; nul respect de parenté que commun; nuls vestemens; nulle agriculture; nul metal; nul usage de vin ou de bled . . ." (32-34) Gonzalo's statement, "I would with such perfection govern, sir, / T'excel the Golden Age" recalls precisely Montaigne's: "Il me desplait que Licurgus et Platon ne l'ayent eüe; car il me semble que ce que nous voyons par experience en ces nations là [les nations sans culture], surpasse, non seulement toutes les peintures dequoy la poësie a embelly l'age doré, et toutes ses inventions à feindre une heureuse condition d'hommes, mais encore la conception et le desir mesme de la philosophie" (33).

[40] See footnote 37 from "il n'y a aucune" until "de bled."

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[41] Alonso's wish "O heavens, that they were living both in Naples, / The King and Queen there!" implies his consent to Miranda and Ferdinand's marriage (5.1.149-40).

[42] Margaret Loftus Ranald in her chapter "'Naked Wretches' -- Clothing as Symbol" demonstrates the removing clothes is a frequent metaphor in Shakespeare's dramas for the loss of political power (*Shakespeare and His Social Context: Essays in Osmotic Knowledge and Literary Interpretation* (New York: AMS Press, 1987) 215-37).

[43] "Ils s'entr'appellent generalement, ceux de mesme aage, freres; enfans, ceux qui sont au dessoubs; et les vieillards sont peres à tous les autres" (38).

[44] "Les hommes y ont plusieurs femmes, et en ont d'autant plus grand nombre qu'ils sont en meilleure reputation de vaillance: c'est une beauté remerquable en leurs mariages, que la mesme jalousie que nos femmes ont pour nous empescher de l'amitié et bienveuillance d'autres femmes, les leurs l'ont toute pareille pour la leur acquerir" (41).

[45] ". . . des femmes couchent à part des maris," "vaillance contre les ennemis et l'amitié à leurs femmes,"

[46] Malcolm Pittock, "Widow Dido," *Notes and Queries* (1986) 33 (231): 3, 368. 368-9)

[47] "Prospero's Wife," *Representing the English Renaissance*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1988) 227, 218. 217-29.

[48] Richard Paul Knowles believes that "Caliban's more important function [more important than his role as a comic figure] is as a symbolic representation of a part of Prospero's nature ("Autolycus, Cloten, Caliban & Co.; 'Comic' Figures and Audience Response in Shakespeare's Last Plays," *The Up-Start Crow: A Shakespeare Journal* (1988) vol. 9, 80 77-95). The view that a person may be constituted of a number of contradictory features was held by Shakespeare's French contempory Montaigne who wrote, "Honteux, insolent; chaste, luxurieux; bavard, taciturne; laborieux, délicat; ingénieux, hébété; chagrin, débonnaire; menteur, véritable; savant, ignorant, et libéral et avare et prodigue, tout cela, je le vois en moi, selon que je me vire; et quiconque s'étudie attentivement trouve en soi, voire et en son jugement même, cette volubilité et discordance. . ." (Essais, II, I, 9, qtd. in E. Lablénie, *Essais sur Montaigne* (Paris: Société d'édition d'enseignement supérieur, 1967) 19). Critics who have interpreted *The Tempest* allegorically include G. Wilson Knight (*The Crown of Life: Essays in Interpretation of Shakespeare's Final Plays* (London: Methuen, 1948) and James Walter ("From Tempest to Epilogue: Augustine's Allegory in Shakespeare's Drama," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* (1983) 98: 1, 60-76). Linda T. Fitz's article "Mental Torment and the Figurative Method of *The Tempest*," though it does not go so far as to approve such an allegorical reading, nevertheless sets in relief the stunning movement of Shakespeare's style from metaphor towards symbol that this play exemplifies (*Estratto* (Roma: Edizioni Di Storia E Letteratura, 1975-76)).

[49] C. S. L. Davies, "Slavery and Protector Somerset; the Vagrancy Act of 1547," *Economic History Review* (1966) 533-49.

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[50] Cf. A. M. Fraser, "Counterfeit Egyptians," *Tsiganologische Studien* (1990) no. 2, 43-69.

[51] Hernán Santa Cruz, *Racial Discrimination,* rev. ed. (New York: The United Nations, 1976) 1.

[52] His regaining his dukedom may appear to some to demonstrate Prospero's selfish desire for power and property. But it could also be seen as part of this reordering of the society. He tried to give up this power at an earlier part of his life; his plan to resume it after seeing the tyranny that reigned in his absence is the result of his own education. Indeed, he must give up the books and magic that he loves in order to return to his dukedom.

[53] *Shakespeare Quarterly* (1986) 37: 1, 52-65.

[54] Alonso foreshadows Prospero's preparation for such interruption when he expresses the wish that Miranda and Ferdinand were alive and made King and Queen of Naples (5.1.149-50).

[55] "Prospero's Wife," 228.

[56] Maurice Hunt discusses Caliban's difficulty in distinguishing metaphorical language from literal language in his chapter on *The Tempest* in *Shakespeare's Romance of the Word* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press and London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1990) 109-40.

[57] Mercury in Christopher Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* (?1593) underlines the necessity of verbalization: "Maids are not woon by brutish force and might, / But speeches full of pleasure and delight" (in *The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe,* ed. Fredson Bowers, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973) ii, 442). While these words perhaps reflect more on the manners of traditional courtship, they also speak to the question of consent.

[58] The first request Ferdinand makes is for instructions about his behaviour in his new environment: "Vouchsafe my prayer / May know if you remain upon this island; / And that you will some good instruction give / How I may bear me here" (1.2.425-8).

[59] For centuries *The Tempest* (along with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) has been distinguished from other plays by Shakespeare because no source for its main plot was uncovered. In his several volume *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare,* Geoffrey Bullough compiles probable and possible source material for parts of the play but nothing that has such a close correspondence to its main plot as the *Primaleon.* Gary Schmidgall's article "*The Tempest* and *Primaleon:* A New Source" has fully convinced me that this novel was used by Shakespeare as the source for *The Tempest* principal plot (*Shakespeare Quarterly* (1986) 37: 4, 423-439).

[60] Schmidgall, 427-8.

[61] As in the works discussed in Rob Nixon's "Caribbean and African Appropriations of *The Tempest,*" *Critical Inquiry* (1987) 13: 3, 557-78 and the following articles: Francis

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Barker and Peter Hulme, "'Nymphs and Reapers Heavily Vanish': The Discursive Con-texts of *The Tempest*," *Alternative Shakespeares*, ed. John Drakakis (London: Methuen, 1985) 191-205; Paul Brown, "'This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine': *The Tempest* and the Discourse of Colonialism," *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism*, ed. Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985) 48-71; Meredith Skura, "Discourse and the Individual: The Case of Colonialism in *The Tempest*," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 40 (1989) 49-69; David Sundelson, "So Rare a Wonder'd Father: Prospero's *Tempest*," *Representling Shakespeare: New Psychoanalytic Essays*, ed. Murrary M. Schwartz and Coppélia Kahn (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980) 33-53; Alden T. Vaughn and Virginia Mason, *Shakespeare's Caliban: A Cultural History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Deborah Willis, "Shakespeare's *Tempest* and the Discourse of Colonialism," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 29 (1989) 277-89; Stephen Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture* (New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 1992).

[62] Schmidgall, 438.

Chapter 6

Conclusion: "The Main Consents"[1]

In comparison to Philip Bock's discussion of "the various meanings of *success* in Shakespeare's plays and sonnets, showing both differences from and similarities to the Baruya people of Papua,"[2] the aim of this research -- to look at the representation of marital consent in a few plays -- seems conservative. However, like Bock's study, its general, perhaps unconscious, aim has been to make Shakespeare more relevant to the twentieth century. Because peoples throughout the world of different economic status, religion, colour, and political stance are still held back by the prejudices of their families and societies from forming new families or giving their blessing to their children's "mixed" marriages, the central concern of my project -- to look at how these relatively superficial aspects of human life were represented in Shakespeare's plays in relation to marital consent -- will make the reader ask questions about such current issues. While more of an attempt was made to situate the plays in their Elizabethan social and political context than to compare them to twentieth-century culture, the questions asked about the impingement of class, religion, colour, and politics on the human right to free consent nevertheless allow the study to address modern concerns.

In saying this, I am aware of the current debate over the continuity of any concept or, to put it in terms more hotly questioned -- over whether there is any progressive unfoldment or evolution of an idea -- in which not only historians, sociologists, and philosophers are engaged but which also concerns students of literature. My attempt to evaluate the concept of marital consent in Shakespeare's *All's Well That Ends Well*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Othello*, and *The Tempest* assumes that the ideas of consent conceived in Elizabethan times by the population and by Shakespeare are related to twentieth-century concepts, because marital restrictions based on class / economics, religion, colour, and political persuasion are still in some measure problematic today. As Barbara Myerhoff has pointed out in her discussion of the "paradox" of the rites of passage, both the biological event of reproduction and the cultural "manipulation" of this event are common to all human societies;[3] surely then the important ritual if not chief ritual in this event -- marital consent -- must be a legitimate object of study, as it is represented in the art and political works of a society so connected to twentieth-century society. At the same time, I also assume that any evaluation of an art piece must take into consideration its context at the time of its composition. As Mikhail Bakhtin in *Rabelais and His World* amply demonstrates, the changing cultural context of a work as it continues to be read over the centuries and in different lands determines to a large extent its varied interpretations (one might say its meanings, given that meaning is a composite of the work, its context and its reader). Bakhtin argues that Rabelais's humour, for example, has been frequently misunderstood since the time of the composition of his humorous literary works, especially *Gargantua* (1534) and *Pantagruel* (1532-3). By bringing to light their cultural context, he helps us to gain a new understanding of this humour. My purpose in trying to recapture some of the cultural context of the idea of consent represented in Shakespeare's plays is similar to Bakhtin's project, because I have tried to see how this idea in these plays was viewed in the context of Elizabethan culture. My second venture has been to set this whole picture against a modern definition. In doing this, the study participates in the movement towards an interdisciplinary and multifaceted approach to research, which is being carried forward by historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and students of literature who find they can better understand their own field when they consult related studies outside their own domain. Indeed, some of the issues raised about the boundaries of marital consent in the four plays have seemed to demand that I take a close look at material that at first glance would appear to be of more interest to historians and sociologists. While the historical method employed in this research has been restricted by my own limited knowledge of history, and occasionally by the unavailability of such knowledge, as for example the lack of information concerning the condition of Jewish women in sixteenth-century Venice and how they were viewed by the Elizabethan English, nevertheless many times the historical and social contexts have provided the key to understanding the various trends in the plays. In the discussion of *All's Well*, for example, the discovery that a law had been passed not long before the composition of the play to control men who used rape to force marriage on women suggested the idea that the bed-trick whereby Helena forces Bertram to marry her is an inversion of a social practice of the time and possibly a means of drawing attention to the injustice of rape committed for the purposes of forced marriage. Similarly, finding that the Elizabethan English society was overwhelmingly prejudiced against black people lent support to my argument that *Othello* in some ways presents an unconventional view on marital consent between people of different colour.

What might have complemented this historical approach is an examination of how the dramatic genre used by Shakespeare "function historically . . . and socially,"[4] both in terms of the limiting features of dramaturgical realization on the representation of consent and in the structuring of audience by the genre's characteristics. The "dynamism" intrinsic to all art because of its dependence upon the spectator, reader, or auditor,[5] and on their cultural context is perhaps even more present in theatrical works than in other literary pieces because under the management of directors their meaning can vary greatly from age to age and from theatre to theatre. Because of the brevity of my project, this aspect of the representation of consent had to be set aside. To better understand the attitudes to change implied in the questions raised about consent in Shakespeare's plays, one would also need to study other changes that were occurring in other institutions during the same epoch, as for example the big changes that occurred in the English universities under Elizabeth I;[6] this approach also had to be set aside for want of time. Similarly, I was unable to carry out an analysis of the restrictions on the freedom of expression under which Shakespeare and other authors of his time were writing that could have enabled me to judge better the degree of resistance to convention in his dramas. A further limitation of this study was its focus on only four of Shakespeare's plays. Because all Shakespeare's comedies and romances and many of his other plays treat the question of consent, a study of all of them might have allowed me to draw conclusions about a general trend in his work with more confidence. Even more illuminating would have been a comparative study of the representation of consent in Shakespeare's works and in those of his contemporary dramatists. These are areas that remain to be explored in future studies.

In spite of its many limitations the foregoing study still answers a number of questions about Shakespeare's representation of consent in his plays. First of all it has shown that marital consent was one of the principal issues treated in some of his most important plays. The changes Shakespeare made to the sources of each play suggests that this subject was "intentionally" included. In instances where the sources themselves deal with the question of consent these changes imply that the marital consent given precedence in Shakespeare's work was one in which men and women were less constrained in their choice of partner for reasons of class, colour, and politics than in the sort of consent represented in the sources of his plays. The primary difference between the marital consent generally represented in the dramas studied and the definition of free and full consent in The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is their emphasis on the father's consent. But while the four plays support the idea of paternal consent, some of them privilege the consent of the party to the marriage over fatherly consent in a way that suggests a preference for a social paradigm in which spouses first choose each other and then seek approval from their fathers. True, in the numerous matches observed, only those approved by father or guardian are enduring and completely successful. But, of these, all the parties to the marriages except

Bertram choose partners they like. Of those that choose partners they like, all except Portia, whose spouse is chosen indirectly by her father through a riddle, subject their choice of partner to their father's approval only after they themselves have made the choice. Moreover, each play studied raises questions that resist the limitations on consent, even when the play as a whole seems to promote them, as in *The Merchant of Venice's* apparent preference for marriages in which both spouses are by birth Christian, but its construction of one of these Christian spouses as a promotor of Jewish matrimonial law.[7] *All's Well That Ends Well* is stronger in its resistance to traditional outlooks, first because there are no fathers alive who can control their children's choices, and second because the inter-class marriage it presents is consciously so, every scene exhibiting in one way or another a debate over class. Although the marriage that is privileged is one wholly approved by the ruling monarch and although one partner is brought to the union through a number of constraints, still the will of the lower ranking partner is given precedence and the arrogant aristocrat is humbled into accepting marriage with one from a lower class. *The Tempest* presents us with a couple who in many ways resist the traditional restrictions on marriage -- Miranda and Ferdinand choose each other independently of any religious, classist, economic, or political considerations, and they are married despite that their fathers have been political enemies. *Othello* is perhaps the play in which Shakespeare most manifests his independence from the racist and paternalist doctrines of his age. By making the parties to marriage the play's chief protagonists and at the same time people of different colour who defy the will of a father and the habits of their society, this play shows that the "main consents" are not those of fathers, or of kings, or of father and groom, but of the man and woman who love each other and wish to establish a family.

Notes

[1] *All's Well That Ends Well,* 5.3.69.

[2] "Success in Shakespeare," *Literature and Anthropology,* ed. Philip A. Dennis and Wendell Aycock (Lubbock TS: Texas Tech University Press, 1989) 65.

[3] Barbara Myerhoff, "Rites of Passage: Process and Paradox," *Studies in Festivity and Ritual,* ed. Victor Turner (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1982) 109.

[4] See Elizabeth P. Skerpan, "Rhetorical Genres and the *Eikon Basilke,*" *Explorations In Renaissance Culture,* XI (1985) 99.

[5] Skerpan, 99.

[6] J. W. Binns writes of the "transformation in the educational system that occurred in the middle of the sixteenth century in England" ("Elizabeth I and the universities," John Henry and Sarah Hutton, eds., *New Perspectives on Renaissance Thought* (London: Dunworth, 1990) 244-52).

[7] Of the four plays, *The Merchant* presents the most restrictive view of marital consent; thus it reflects the laws in Shakespeare's era which placed the tightest restrictions on marriages between people of different religion.

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